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THE  
R I T U A L  
OF THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
AND IRELAND  
ILLUSTRATED;

WITH

OCCASIONAL REFERENCE TO THE OBJECTIONS  
OF DISSENTERS.

BY THE

REV. GERALD WENSLEY TYRRELL, A.M.

*SECRETARY OF THE DOWN AND CONNOR DIOCESAN BRANCH OF  
THE CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR IRELAND,  
AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST HONOURABLE THE  
MARQUESS OF DONEGAL.*

---

“ What mean ye by this service?”—*Exodus* xii. 26.

“ We shall endeavour to convince the enemies, by assisting the friends of  
our Church devotions.”—*Dean Comber.*

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L O N D O N :  
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

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M.DCCC.XL.

784.

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,  
RICHARD, LORD BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR,  
BY WHOSE  
LEARNING, INTEGRITY, AND UNCOMPROMISING  
ADHERENCE TO THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF  
THE CHURCH,  
THE INTERESTS OF TRUE RELIGION HAVE BEEN  
SIGNALLY PROMOTED,  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES  
ARE  
GRATEFULLY AND DUTIFULLY  
INSCRIBED.



## P R E F A C E.

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To every conscientious member of the National Church it must afford matter of regret that so much misapprehension prevails respecting her real character and principles ; it being not uncommon to hear cavils and objections urged, which, though distinguished alike by misrepresentation, arrogance of assertion, and ignorance of history, it is difficult for the unlearned, or for those whose attention is engaged in other pursuits, to silence with a ready reply. Many excellent volumes, it is true, have been composed, in which the scoffer has been unanswerably refuted, and the Church exhibited in her real lustre ; but these, by their size and price, are precluded from general reach, and are rarely to be met with, save in the library of the divine and scholar : it has consequently occurred to me that a manual on the subject, compiled from them during the intervals of professional duty, might not be without use, and especially that in our times, when attempts are prevalent to instruct the youth of these realms in a medley of religious opinions, tending to render them indifferent to any, a familiar exposition of the “Church’s illustrative comment on the Bible” might in its measure prove a counterbalance.

Should any statements throughout the book appear to display hostility to persons of a contrary opinion, such a feeling is far from me. That amiable and enlightened Christian, Bishop Horne, has observed, “*He who, in certain cases, gives men no offence, will for that reason give them no instruction.* Light itself is painful to weak eyes ; but delightful to them when grown stronger and reconciled to it with use : and *he who was instrumental in*

bringing them to a perfect state of vision, though less acceptable at first, may yet, for his real kindness, be more cordially thanked afterwards, than if he had made the ease and safety of his own person the measure of his duty."

I have employed chiefly the writings of Daubeny, Dodsworth, Fulford, Palmer, Pinder, Riddle; of Bishops Davys, Jebb, Lawrence, Mant, and the "noble army" of authors cited by the latter prelate in his edition of the Book of Common Prayer. In most instances I have quoted them verbatim, usefulness rather than originality being my object. Much aid has been derived also from the tracts entitled *Richard Nelson*, *Stephen's Compendium*, *Boyd* on *The Church*, *The Church of England Magazine*, and an excellent little periodical, *The Penny Sunday Reader*, and when indebted to other publications for an occasional reflection, I have acknowledged the obligation in its proper place.

With heartfelt desire that this essay may subserve the glory of God in the edification of his Church, I conclude in the language of Archdeacon Daubeny, "Though the office assumed by me on this occasion is not more honourable than that of the Gibeonites, who were but hewers of wood and drawers of water for the service of the tabernacle; yet if by collecting sound and good materials, I shall prove the instrument of conveying useful information upon a subject as little understood as it is generally neglected, I shall hope that the merit of the design will be suffered to atone for the imperfection of the execution."

G. W. T.

Holywood, May, 1840.

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ERRATA.

At page 49, line 2, for "son" read "sun."  
 — 381, — 4, for "most" read "many."

Distance from the press must plead excuse for a few other typographical inaccuracies.



# THE RITUAL OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ON FORMS OF PRAYER.

THE use of forms of prayer is in accordance with the Scripture and the practice of the Church of Christ. The Israelites continually used forms of prayer and praise in their public worship; the first account of their solemn worship is a form of praise sung in parts by men and women after their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians. Exod. xv. 1-21. Soon after, God himself prescribed a form of words, by which the priest was to bless the people, Numb. vi. 23-26, (though Aaron, an eloquent man, and favoured by Divine inspiration, was then high priest,) and also forms of prayer for the use of those who offered their first fruits and tithes. The Psalms of David were many of them forms of prayer and praise, composed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not only for his own private use, but also for the public service of the temple, 1 Chron. xvi. 7; 2 Chron. xxix. 30; v. 13. After the captivity, the Jews had forms of prayer, some of which appear to have been in use in the time of our Saviour; and that Jesus Christ and his apostles joined in the Jewish worship, and thereby sanctioned the use of pre-composed prayers, is evident from the Gospel history and the Acts of the Apostles; and that the Lord's prayer was given by our Saviour to his apostles as a

formulary of prayer, may be gathered from the command in St. Matthew, vi. 9, compared with St. Luke, xi. 1, 2\*, and also from the testimony of numerous Christian writers who lived in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles. Further, the sublime prayer recorded in Acts iv. 24-30, seems to have been a pre-composed form, because we there read, *that the whole company lifted up their voices with one accord*, that is, joined all together with audible voices in prayer, which could not possibly have been the case, unless such prayer was a precomposed set form; for whatever may be said in favour of joining mentally with our spirit in a prayer conceived extempore, it is not possible that a considerable congregation could join vocally or aloud, as the apostles and their company are related to have done, in a prayer not so composed. But besides the Lord's prayer†, it is evident from the history of the primitive Christians that, after the cessation of the

\* "I am the last person that would wish to confine Christians to the use of a written form of words in their private devotions; on the contrary, I would rather encourage them to form a habit of addressing their 'Father who seeth in secret,' in any expressions that are best intelligible to themselves, which occur at the moment. But *congregational* prayer—*common* supplications—*joint* worship—is a very different thing, and accordingly our Lord supplies to his disciples no form of words for solitary devotion, but only warns them against a public display of what ought to be secret, and bids them enter each into his closet, and shut the door when about to engage in private devotion. But immediately after, He does teach them a form of words evidently designed for joint worship, and accordingly expressed in the *plural* number. The contrast is very remarkable between our Lord's expressions in the different precepts, '*thou*, when *thou* prayest, enter into *thy* closet,' &c.: 'when *ye* pray, say, Our Father,' &c. Whatever may be thought of the precise kind and degree of the use which our Lord designed should be made of the very prayer itself which He taught, this much, at least, is plain—that in teaching it, He gave the strongest possible sanction to the use of precomposed prayer for congregational worship."—*Pastoral Letter of Archbishop WHATELY.*

† So averse was our Lord to unnecessary innovation and the affectation of novelty, (says Grotius,) that He who had not the

extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, liturgies, or precomposed forms of prayer, were very early used by them\*, as some of the most ancient writers speak of them under the appellation of “common prayers,” “constituted or appointed prayers,” and “solemn prayers;” indeed so early were some of them composed that the four most generally in use bore the names of St. Peter, St. John, St. James, and St. Mark, as the respective authors† of them.

Spirit by measure, and in whom was hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who spake as never man spake, selected the words and phrases of this prayer from formularies at that time in common use among the Jews.

\* Bingham, in his *Christian Antiquities of the Church*, shows that, besides the compliance of the first Christians with the stated forms of the Jewish liturgy and worship, they had some forms of their own in constant use among themselves, among which we may reckon : 1. The Lord’s prayer. 2. The form of baptism constantly used without any variation. 3. The form of professing their faith in baptism, or the form of sound words settled in every Church. 4. The forms of renouncing Satan and covenanting with Christ in baptism. 5. The forms of scripture hymns and psalms and glorifications of God ; to which the ancients seem to add, 6. The forms of benediction, such as the “Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c., and lastly, The repetition of the history of Christ’s institution of the last supper, as a necessary part of consecration, which, together with the use of the Lord’s prayer in the celebration of the Eucharist, is generally thought to descend from apostolical practice.

† Mr. Palmer, *Orig. Liturg.*—Dissertation on the Liturgy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, having stated that it was used through Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, observes further, “When I reflect on the vast extent of these countries, the independence of the churches which existed there, the power which each bishop had of improving the liturgy of his church, the circumstantial varieties which we find between the liturgies of these churches, and yet the substantial identity of all, it seems to me difficult, if not impossible, to account for this identity and uniformity in any other manner than by supposing that the apostles themselves had originated the Oriental liturgy, and communicated it to all those churches at their very foundation. The uniformity between these liturgies, as extant in the fourth or fifth century, is such as bespeaks a common origin. Their diversity is such as to prove the remoteness of the period at which they were originated. To what remote period can we refer, as exhibiting a perfect general uniformity of liturgy, except to the apostolic age ?

Our Saviour, it may be said, directed his disciples to take no thought beforehand, or premeditate how or what they should speak ; but, not to mention that at the time when our English translation was made, the phrase to "take thought" imported, in agreement with the original Greek, anxious carefulness and solicitude, the injunction was evidently applicable to the particular time and circumstances only, when, in furtherance of an extraordinary mission from God, He promised to grant them the immediate assistance of his Holy Spirit to defend the truth, so that their adversaries could not gainsay nor resist it, and it would be doing violence to the meaning of our Saviour to refer the command to ordinary cases.

Many and various advantages arise from prescribed forms of prayer: I will mention a few of the most prominent and valuable.

1st. A form of prayer (written of course in the vulgar tongue, or common language of the country,) is most easily understood and heartily followed by the people; having been composed with that precision, which is the result of mature deliberation, it is thereby rendered more plain, simple, and perspicuous than extemporaneous effusion, and it affords opportunity of being studied and examined in private, whereas, if they know not the nature of the petitions about to be offered, instead of cordially joining with the minister, they must wait to make out the sense of his prayer, before they can fully enter into it as a petition to God\*. If this be of any consequence at all,

Let us remember also that existing documents of the second century enable us to trace this liturgy to that period; and that in the time of Justin Martyr, (to whose writings I allude,) the Christian Church was only removed one link from the apostles themselves."

\* "But for the most part, a large proportion of the hearers, if not all of them, have their minds occupied in taking in the sense of each sentence that is uttered, till their attention is called to the

much more so is it to those who sit at any great distance, or who may be afflicted with the infirmity of deafness.

2nd. It preserves to the people a great religious privilege, enabling them to take their parts in the public worship of the Church by following or accompanying the minister, not with their hearts only, but their voices, thereby having their attention fixed and quickened, their devotion animated, and the public service given its proper character of an united and common address to the Almighty. Of this privilege, which was handed down from the primitive Church, the people were deprived by the Romish innovation of having the prayers in Latin, but it was restored to them by our Reformed Church, of which it is in a great degree characteristic, inasmuch as dissenters cannot enjoy it, from their using extemporaneous prayers.

3rd. It contributes to the preservation of order and decency in the church, by affording no scope for the ebullitions of passion, the sallies of a fantastical imagination, the blunders of ignorance, or the extravagancies of fanaticism: deformities\* little accordant

next sentence, and thus they are deceived, and I must say most hurtfully deceived, into imagining that they are themselves praying, when in fact they are at best only overhearing another person praying. I have said 'at best,' because I am convinced that oftener than not, the minister is deceived no less than the people, and imagines himself to be praying, when in reality, he is delivering what may be called an oblique sermon, where he is addressing himself, not to God, but to the congregation; and conveying to them, under the form of prayer, the doctrines and sentiments, the exhortations and reproofs, which he wishes to impress on their minds."—*Pastoral Letter of Archbishop WHATELY.*

\* This has been admitted by dissenters of the present day. See JAMES's *Church Member's Guide*. See also a *Treatise on Prayer*, by Wm. WALFORD, tutor of the academy for educating dissenting ministers, at Homerton, in which (after animadverting on the conduct of the clergy of the Church of England for declaring their assent to its liturgy,) there is the following on the mode in which public prayer is abused amongst dissenters:

with that beauty of holiness which becomes the sanctuary of God, yet which experience has witnessed, and which history records, in some, at least, of the advocates and practisers of extemporaneous prayers.

4th. It is the best preservation of soundness and consistency of doctrine, by operating as a control upon the indiscretion and errors of the minister, and gives a fixed character to the faith by embodying in its several services all the great doctrines of the Gospel according to their relative importance.

Circumstances have occurred of late years which plainly demonstrate the benefit of a liturgy, namely, that whilst no episcopal congregation ever became socinian, it is admitted by a dissenting periodical\*, that in England, out of two hundred and fifty-eight chapels of dissenters, in which once was proclaimed redemption by the cross, and the co-equality of the Son and Holy Ghost in one glorious and blessed Trinity, two hundred and thirty-five are now the vehicles whereby the God-denying apostacy, and other soul-destroying heresies are propagated throughout the land, and that the sum of seven thousand two hundred pounds by which socinianism is supported, was left

“ What is to be thought of men who can degrade the sacred institution of public prayer into an instrument for the display of bigotry, presumption, and ignorance, or who dare to render it a vehicle for low humour, ridiculous conceits, or vulgar tales? Decency recoils from the display, and true piety is ready to weep over the baneful prostitution. The practice, which is by no means uncommon, I fear, of using prayer as a medium of fortifying fanatical representations of the Gospel and fostering a censorious and bitter temper among the devotees of such teaching, is little, if at all, less reprehensible; and all conspire to bring into contempt the pure and sacred spirit of Christian devotion.”

\* The *Eclectic Review*.—In America also, especially in Boston, in which the light of true religion once shone, the deadly taint of socinianism has spread. Alas! that in the northern parts of this country (Ireland) the records of presbyterianism should tell a like story!

by orthodox dissenters for the propagation of doctrines the very contrary to those of socinianism. The late proceedings in the courts of law respecting Lady Hewley's charitable bequests, which, though undoubtedly left by her for orthodox dissenters, yet were all appropriated to socinian purposes, afford another proof of the necessity of some standing formularies of faith. Indeed so evident has this appeared to some dissenters, that the endowments belonging to many chapels are made to depend upon the condition, that the doctrines taught in them shall be in conformity with the doctrines of the Established Church.

Some churches which possessed liturgies, have, it is true, fallen into error: these, however, have arisen, not from their possessing, but from *their departing from scriptural formularies*; besides, it is not asserted that formularies are an absolutely effectual preservative against corruption, but that they possess, as has been shown, a powerful tendency to counteract the advance of error, and to keep the stream of Christian doctrines unpolluted. When once introduced, error may thus, perhaps, be rendered more lasting, but it would be obviously unfair to argue from this the *abuse* against the *use* of creeds and articles. Every institution might be similarly attacked, and every wholesome authority abrogated. Established formularies, it might be added, possess somewhat of a renovating influence. If a community without them depart from the faith, there is no trace left of its former standing—no marks and tokens in the trackless forest of error by which to retrace its steps; whereas, if error is introduced into accredited confessions, still there is something that is valuable left, (as in the case of Rome,) disagreeing with the rubbish piled upon it; or even if every pure creed and article be rejected, the

remembrance of them cannot be entirely obliterated ; there they are on record to be a speaking witness to the apostate, how novel her proposed doctrines are, and, at least, to point out to her whence she has fallen. We have instances of churches (the Syrian, in India, appears to be one,) thus being kept alive, to waken at last from the slumber of ages, and rise once more to put on their beautiful garments\*.

A few other considerations which show the benefits of prescribed forms of prayer are as follows :

1st. No sufficient number of men could be found possessing the gift of such extemporaneous prayer as is due to the majesty of God and the glory of his Son Jesus Christ. Besides, if the prayers be left to the discretion of an individual minister, he will not only omit many things through his forgetfulness or infirmity, which the people require, but also from his natural leaning towards his own state of mind will frame his petitions rather to suit his own case than theirs.

2nd. Must it not promote the communion of saints, and is there not something cheering and elevating in the thought, to remember that the members of the Church throughout the world† are (though locally separated) periodically engaged at the same time in the same prayers and praises? that we are using words which are rising to heaven, not in the churches of Great Britain and Ireland only, but from

\* *Essay in Church of England Magazine.*

† The liturgy has been translated into Arabic, and into the different languages of India, and also into French, Greek, Russian, Dutch, German, Polish, and Italian.—See *Reports of the Christian Knowledge and Prayer-Book and Homily Societies*. There is now at Liverpool a congregation of converted Jews who use the liturgy in Hebrew. There is a daily Hebrew service at Jerusalem, and on the Lord's day, in Arabic.—See *Report of London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*.

the banks of the Ganges, the St. Lawrence, the Ohio, in the islands of the Pacific, and in the Western Ocean\* ?

\* "It is not in this age only in which you live, that this service conveys the devotions of Christians to heaven. In some of the ejaculations it contains the first disciples breathed their praises and their wishes to the Most High. Its collects have, many of them, for many hundreds of years, been the vehicles of the public devotions of the Church, and upon some of its apostrophes has the last breath of distinguished martyrs trembled, whose piety, during their lives, was refreshed by its hymns and its psalms. It is not under the Gospel dispensation alone that some parts of this service have been used to express the common devotions of the faithful. There are hymns in it which were sung by the saints under the Mosaic dispensation, and in the use of the Psalms particularly, the Church of the New Testament is found in society with the Church of the Old ; for in these sacred compositions, not the emotions of David's heart only were vented, but much of the worship of God's ancient people did consist. It is not only in the Church militant upon earth that this service in some of its parts is used. We have borrowed from the Church triumphant in heaven their congratulatory anthem and their perpetual hymn ; and have reason to believe that their voices are in concert with ours when they sing the song of the redeemed. How sublime is this view of the communion and fellowship of the Church under the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, in different ages and different nations on earth and in heaven, in the use of some part or other of that holy liturgy which it is our distinguishing felicity to have received from our fathers ! Who would not wish, in the temple, to bear upon his lips those psalms and prayers in which the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs, have uttered their devotions to God ? How dead must he be to the finest associations which can affect the mind, who is not animated to a devout and fervent performance of his part of the service of the sanctuary, by the consideration that, upon these same censers which the Church holds out to him, incense hath been put by those hands which are now extended before the throne of the Almighty, and that, as its smoke ascended, those eyes were lifted up to heaven which are now fixed on the visible glory of God and of the Lamb !"—Bishop DEHON.

"And if it be animating and impressive to find ourselves thus linked to churches far off, and separated from us by their geographical remoteness, it is no less a source of solemn enjoyment to find ourselves, by the same chain, bound to the men of other times. I cannot forget that these prayers have continued to gladden the hearts of the persecuted Protestants of passed-by ages, have been heard in the prison cells of England, have been used at the stake, have floated above the flames, and almost borne down the taunts

3rd. If detained at home by sickness or affliction the churchman can bend the knee in private ; and with his book of prayer, in this case of necessity, though absent in body, mingle in spirits with the tens of thousands who are in the sanctuary, and feel that there is “one Lord, one faith,” and that Christ is all in all, the head of his mystical body.

4th. To pray acceptably, it is requisite not only that we offer up our petitions to God with sincerity and earnestness, but that we should afterwards trust and depend upon Him for the fulfilment of them, according to the promises which He has made us in Jesus Christ our Lord. For this purpose, a set form of prayer is certainly a great help to us ; by means of it, we can take a review of the petitions which we may have offered at the throne of grace : and, whilst we apply our minds to the thoughts of the blessings we have asked, we can call our faith and confidence into lively exercise, in waiting for an answer to our prayers.

The benefits of a set form for public worship were

and execrations of Smithfield. I cannot forget that the attachment of the martyrs of the sixteenth century to these very prayers was a special article in the indictment under which they were condemned. I cannot forget the chivalrous ardour of Crammer, who pledged himself to defend the prayer book of the English church against all and every assailant ; the love expressed for it by Hulliers, who clasped it to his heart at the stake, and died with it in his grasp ; the veneration for it, expressed in the conduct of Taylor, when he bequeathed it to his wife as the best legacy he could leave her : a work so wrought into the history of Protestantism ; a liturgy so associated with the most trying and triumphant times of the Church’s struggles, cannot but be precious to every one who truly enjoys the privileges then so dearly purchased. We cannot but feel gladdened at the thought that the words of sacred worship are the same with those which these noble spirits valued, and that in the use of the prayers handed down from them to us, our Church has an uniformity and a connexion with the Church of those eventful days.”—*Discourses preached in Derry*, by A. BOYD, Curate of the Cathedral.

felt by CALVIN, the most esteemed by dissenters of all the foreign Reformers, who, in a letter to the Protector of England in the reign of Edward the Sixth, A.D. 1548, thus expresses himself:—“ I highly approve of a fixed form of prayer and ecclesiastical rites, from which it should not be lawful for the pastors in the discharge of their office to depart, as well in consideration of the weakness and ignorance of some, as that it may plainly appear how our churches agree among themselves; and lastly, that a stop may be put to the desultory levity of those who affect novelties. There ought to be an established Catechism, an established mode of administering the sacraments, and also a public form of prayer.” BAXTER also writes, “ The constant disuse of forms is apt to breed giddiness in religion, and it may make men hypocrites, who shall delude themselves with conceits that they delight in God, when it is but in those novelties and varieties of expression that they are delighted.”

It is objected that the use of prescribed forms is not praying in the Spirit, but quenching the Spirit; but these terms, so far as they belong to the present age, signify, the former, not being furnished with a variety of phrases in prayer, but having religious affections breathed into us by the Holy Ghost for the exercise of this duty: and the latter, in the only sense in which it can be applied to us, means extinguishing such affections, by indulging sin, or suffering them to die away through negligence. Whoever is not assisted by the Holy Spirit in prayer, whatever may be the form which he may adopt for the purpose, will never pray effectually; and whilst of this we should be fully persuaded, we must differ from the enthusiasts with respect to what is called the spirit of prayer. With them it means a spirit of ready invention and extemporaneous effusion, which is by no

means the certain effect of Divine influence. Its real meaning is, what can proceed from God alone, a spirit of pious affection ; such as David felt when he composed the 42nd, 51st, 84th, 86th, and other psalms which could be pointed out\*.

The spirit of devotion which gave acceptance to the simple prayer of the publican, and without which the most perfect composition is but a collection of words offensive to the Deity to whom it is addressed, is a mixture of humiliation and gratitude derived from the consideration of our vileness or wretchedness on the one hand, and the contemplation of infinite goodness and astonishing loving-kindness on the other. Whosoever prays in this disposition of the soul, most certainly prays by the Holy Spirit, because this disposition is not *natural*, but the effect of the Divine influence, which is graciously employed for the purpose of bringing fallen man back to his Maker. This devout disposition, the work of the Holy Spirit, is not, it is true, confined to any particular mode of prayer ; but as it confessedly depends more upon the *heart* than the *head*, it is more likely to prevail on occasions, when, in consequence of the head being less occupied with attention to the prayer, the heart is more at liberty to be affected by the spirit of it.

The objection is put sometimes in another form,

\* " In extemporary prayer, what men most admire, God least regardeth, namely, *the volubility of the tongue*. Herein a Tertullian may equal, yea exceed, St. Paul himself, whose speech was but mean. (1 Cor. x. 10.) ' O, it is the heart keeping time and tune with the voice' that God listeneth to ; otherwise the nimblest tongue tires, and the loudest voice grows dumb before it comes half way to heaven. ' Make it,' says God to Moses, ' in all things like the pattern in the mount.' Only the conformity of the words with the mind, mounted in heavenly thought, is acceptable with God. The gifts of extemporary prayer and ready utterance may be bestowed upon a reprobate ; but the grace thereof (religious affection) is only given to God's servants."—*FULLER's Meditations.*

namely, that using forms of prayer deadens the fervour of devotion, and indeed there is nothing about which people are more apt to be mistaken than about what they term fervour of devotion. If the object be the temporary excitement of the feelings, then indeed the loud voice, vehement utterance, and highly coloured language, which are frequently the accompaniments of extemporaneous prayer, might be preferred to the chaste and subdued tone of our liturgy. But what connexion has this temporary excitement of the feelings with the workings of the Holy Spirit? Probably nothing. God's usual manner of granting the Holy Spirit is in answer to *our* prayers, "Ask and ye shall have,"—and without undervaluing the prayers of others on our behalf, yet surely the more natural means for us to obtain it, is not merely by listening to the rapturous devotion of another, but by humbly offering up our own prayers to the throne of Grace; and the more certain evidence of our receiving the Spirit, is not excitement at the moment, but the finding ourselves more strengthened to fight the good fight of faith for the time to come; and then may we believe we have really experienced the greatest fervour of devotion, when we have *ourselves* joined in confessions of sin, and find upon our returning from our prayers that we hate all sin, particularly our own, with a perfect hatred, and that we are more steadfastly purposed not to offend.

That we always use the same form, has also been made a source of cavil; but if our wants are the same, where is the force of this objection? Did not Christ himself return to pray, using the same words each time, because his necessities continued the same? The volubility of a beggar may, by dint of importunity, compel our hand to give that which our judgment would withhold; but God is not so wrought

on : the devotion with which we approach Him, though intense, should be calm : the petitions we present, should be earnest though sober, lest putting forth, like Uzzah, an unhallowed hand upon the ark, we receive not a blessing, but a curse. " Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few." Eccl. v. 2. " God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in remembrance of all them that are about Him." Psalm lxxxix. 7.

It has been considered by some that a written form induces formality, and when men are unconscious of their wants or insensible of their obligations, there will be much formality in their religious homage, whether they pray with a written form or without one ; and in this respect the charge of formality may be pretty equally divided between the two. But where a truly spiritual frame of mind is previously possessed, there is nothing in our liturgy to deaden that feeling, or to restrain the strongest emotions of the mind. On the contrary, every part of it has served to deepen humility, to encourage hope, and to elevate devotion.

Another objection is, that the use of forms of prayer abridges the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, which text of Scripture (frequently made use of by the schismatic to screen him in choosing whatever form of religion is agreeable to fancy, and in rejecting the legitimate authority of those who have the spiritual rule over him,) has little to do with the matter : as the freedom of which the Apostle speaks, is not an uncontrolled restraint in religious matters, but freedom from the yoke of circumcision and the other ordinances of the Mosaic law. But even supposing the passage to be applicable, it is absurd for sectarians to refer it to this sub-

ject, and to talk of their liberty\* in this respect, seeing that the extemporary prayer of the minister is as much a form to the people as any other: and the only choice is, whether they will have a *good* form or a *bad* one; a form of sound words with which they are previously acquainted, on the one hand, and on the other, a form upon the propriety of which they cannot at any time depend; and I cannot help believing that if the dif-

\* "We complain, and very justly too, that the Popish clergy are too assuming, and claim a superiority over the laity inconsistent with the natural rights of mankind. Pardon me, gentlemen, if I say that you claim a very extraordinary superiority over the laity: every one of you claims an exclusive privilege of manufacturing our public prayers, and assumes a right of making us say to the Deity whatever he thinks fit. In the most momentous affairs in which we can be concerned upon earth, we must depend entirely upon the discretion, honesty, and ability of every private parson, and use the words and matter of our addresses to our God and Maker, such as he is pleased to give, without ever seeing, examining, or judging for ourselves. This is really treating us as if we were children or fools. We allow that you have a right to offer our prayers: and as it is not fit that we should all speak, the minister may be called the mouth of the congregation. In our congregations the mouth runs before the mind, and speaks without giving us any opportunity of thinking what we ought to speak, and often say things that we should certainly reject, had we time calmly to examine them. Our mouth leads us into the gross blunders of presenting our addresses to the Deity first, and next judges whether they are proper addresses after they are offered, when we cannot mend what is wrong or alter what is improper. We absurdly begin where we should end: for in the natural order of things, the congregation should first be satisfied that the prayers are proper to be offered, and then the minister should offer them in their name, just as a prudent man will think before he speaks. But in our *admirable* plan of worship, the congregation speaks by its mouth before it has considered what it is to say; that is, the parson offers up the petition, and the people may judge of the propriety afterwards if they please. The absurdity here is so great that it is astonishing how it escapes the observation of the laity, and it would not escape them in any other instance. Should the ablest member of the House of Commons propose to offer an address to His Majesty in the name of the House, without communicating it to the members, the impropriety would be immediately perceived," &c. &c.—*Letter from a Blacksmith to the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland.*

ferent extempore prayers used in the different dissenting chapels on any given Sunday were to be written down, and afterwards compared with our liturgy, that any candid person would immediately confess that neither in spirit, language, or general usefulness, could they be put in competition with it. At the Reformation, the Church had just escaped from the tyranny of the see of Rome; and so far from the use of a form of prayer being thought an abridgment of Christian liberty, that, on the contrary, it was thought inconsistent with the professed opposition of the Church of England to that tyranny, to invest every private minister with such an absolute authority over the consciences of his flock as to make them entirely dependent on his arbitrary fancy in their public devotions. Had our reformers condemned the use of liturgies, they would have condemned the practice of the apostolic age itself, and run into the wildest extravagancies of enthusiasm and fanaticism.

The practice of praying extempore was first introduced into Britain by some emissaries of the Pope, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Their object was to distract and divide the Church of England, which they felt to be the great bulwark of the Reformation, and which they therefore endeavoured to overthrow by every means in their power\*. The puritans derived

\* The above fact has been doubted; but the evidence on which it rests is unquestionable, as furnished, first, by Sir William Boswell, English resident at the Hague, 1640; secondly, by Archbishop Bramhall to Primate Usher, 1646; thirdly, by the case of Cummin, a Dominican monk, who was tried before the Council in 1567; and fourthly, by the case of Thomas Heth, a Jesuit, in the year 1561, as recorded in the registry of Rochester.—See EVELYN's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 59; *Foxes and Firebrands*, pp. 7, 15, &c.

The Romish Church had before this period acted upon a like policy (and it has been but too successful in it to this day).—See STRYPE's *Cranmer*, pp. 207, 208.

more of their peculiarities from the Church of Rome than they have ever been willing to acknowledge ; first from the active malice of the monkish pioneers of the Papacy in Elizabeth's days, and again in the time of the great rebellion ; the destruction of the Church of England being in their mind equivalent to the undisputed dominion of Popery throughout the world. The puritans meant not so ; but they really promoted the object of the Romanists by their passion, by their prejudices, and by their eager zeal against much which was essentially good, and against much which they themselves acknowledged to be indifferent.

Express directions have been given for public worship in the New Testament by St. Paul, when he is instructing Timothy, his son, in the faith, concerning the government of the churches and congregations under his episcopal jurisdiction and inspection, 1 Tim. ii: 1, 2. In this exhortation we may observe the priority which the Apostle assigns to prayer, as the principal and most noble part of that duty for which religious assemblies are held : " I exhort therefore that first of all," &c. ; the various parts of which he considers devotion to consist ; " supplications" for the averting of hurtful things, sins, and dangers ; " prayers" for the procuring all good things which we want, " intercessions" for others as well as ourselves, and " thanksgivings" for mercies already received ; the universal charity which should accompany the devotions of Christians, in that they are required to pray for the welfare of " all men," the spirit of dutiful respect which the Gospel teaches towards rulers, and the end and object of devotion, which, like that of Christianity itself, is stated to be the leading of quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

Our liturgy accurately corresponds in these several particulars with the directions of the Apostle. Do

you desire to find examples of supplications for the averting things hurtful? You will perceive them in the general confession, at the commencement of our morning and evening services, in many of the daily and occasional collects, and especially in that division of the Litany or general supplication, where we call on the good Lord to deliver us from the various perils and calamities incident to our imperfect condition.

By "prayers" are here to be understood, not general acts of devotion, as the word commonly imports, but, in a more definite and specific sense, petitions for mercy and the supply of our numerous wants. For these, again, we cannot be at a loss, if we turn to the collects for the daily services, or for the Sundays and holydays throughout the year; or to those comprehensive articles in the latter division of the Litany, where we beseech the good Lord to hear us, that so it may please Him to grant the manifold blessings which are then severally asked for from his bounty.

Do you require "intercessions" or entreaties in behalf of others as well as of yourselves? The prayer for all conditions of men in the service, or the litany again, or the prayer for Christ's Church militant here on earth in the order of the holy communion, are satisfactory testimonies to the respect paid in our Common Prayer Book to this charitable portion of the exhortation.

Do you ask for examples of "giving of thanks?" The several psalms, and hymns, and doxologies, which are incorporated in our different services—the ascription of glory to God in the order of the communion—the general thanksgiving at the end of the morning and evening prayer, are lively expressions of gratitude for mercies already received.

Are we directed to offer up these addresses for "all

men?" Our liturgy provides us with forms to comply with the direction in general terms, "for all sorts and conditions of men;" or in phrases of more particular application, so as to testify our benevolence to those who might otherwise be, by possibility, supposed to be excluded from partaking in it, as for "all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, as well as for the good estate of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, for our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers," as well as for our countrymen and friends.

Finally, does the exhortation instruct us to pray and give thanks for "kings, and for all that are in authority?" In this respect also our liturgy assists us. A special prayer for the welfare of the sovereign is introduced into each of our different services; whilst, as the occasion appears to require, we are instructed also to put up our petitions for our temporal and spiritual rulers; for the magistrates to whom is committed the exercise of the civil authority, and for the pastor who is intrusted with the ministration of the Gospel of peace.

Thus entirely does the common prayer correspond with the exhortation of St. Paul. So comprehensive, indeed, are its views, that it would be difficult to mention a want, fit to be made the subject of a public petition, for which provision is not adequately furnished. And so scriptural withal are these provisions, and so well calculated to conspire with the word of God in producing the most salutary effects, as to authorize the assertion, that he who shall constantly, diligently, and conscientiously attend upon the services of our Church, and shall endeavour to conform his heart and conduct to the principles which animate the prayers, will not fail of being actuated by a lively sense of his own infirmities, by a faithful reliance on the goodness of God, and by profound gratitude for

the manifold blessings which he enjoys ; by brotherly love to his fellow-Christians, and universal charity for all mankind ; by loyalty to his sovereign, and a meek and reverent submission towards all his superiors, whether in Church or State ; in a word, by that true spirit of the Gospel which the Apostle concludes with recommending as the result of well-regulated prayer, and which is manifested by a diligent endeavour to "lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty."

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## CHAPTER II.

## HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

THIS is called the Book of *Common* Prayer, because it is designed for the common use of the congregation ; in the services of which they can assent and agree together, touching what they shall ask, and become *actual parties* in it, glorifying God not only with "one mind," but with one mouth.

A concise account of its origin and formation will be of no less importance than interest at the present day ; for many Protestants who dissent from the Church, aye, and many churchmen, have not considered the care, the piety and learning, the time and singular and providential circumstances under which it has grown up to its present excellence. Many people who constantly read it, do not know, or do not think upon the claims which it has upon their veneration. The hand of Providence seems to have been eminently displayed in not permitting it to be established all at once in its permanent form, and in subjecting it to a *variety* of examinations and controversies calculated to try it to the utmost, and bring it out at last, *like fine gold seven times tried in the fire*, at once beauteous and useful.

Before it was compiled, different liturgies were used in different parts of the kingdom, consisting of prayers and offices, some of which had been transmitted from very ancient times, and others were of later origin, adapted to the Romish innovations ; being debased by superstitious tenets and useless ceremonies \*. Amongst the chief of these corruptions

\* See prefaces to Common Prayer Book, concerning ceremonies, and concerning the service of the Church.

were the following :—the Scriptures and prayers in an unknown language ; invocation of the Virgin and saints ; purgatory ; five supernumerary sacraments, transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the elements in the Lord's supper, and the consequent elevation and worshipping of them ; denying the cup of blessing to all save the clergy ; incongruous mixture of legendary tales and monkish fictions with Scripture, &c., &c.

Its first compilers were a committee of bishops and other eminently learned divines, the most efficient of whom, among the former, were CRANMER, RIDLEY, HOLBEACH, and GOODRICH, among the latter, MAY, TAYLOR, HAYNES, and COX. Most of them, when the storm of persecution arose afterwards, sealed with their blood the faith they had maintained\*.

\* “Never forget, every time you take up the liturgy, that it is sprinkled with the blood of these holy men, ‘of whom the world was not worthy,’ and that they call upon you to be followers of them, who, ‘through faith’ in the doctrines which it contains, and through ‘patience’ of the sufferings which they endured in its behalf, ‘now inherit the promises.’”—JER. TAYLOR.

“I know it is the maxim of the present age to condemn the authority of the past, and to set at naught the wisdom of our fathers ; but who can contemplate those reverend men, throwing off the trammels of superstition with which they had been shackled from their youth ; boldly confessing Christ in the face of opposition ; yielding up their bodies to the death, in hope of a better resurrection : who, I say, can contemplate those men, who can read their writings, rich, full, and apostolic, infinitely beyond the degenerate productions of modern days, and not almost conceive an enthusiastic veneration for their names ? I envy not the man who can hesitate to give them honour, and to ‘esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake ; ‘whom God,’ says Hooker, ‘hath endued with principal gifts to aspire unto knowledge, by whose exercises, labours, and divine studies He hath so blest, that the world, for their great and rare skill that way, hath them in singular admiration ; may we reject even their judgment, as being utterly of no moment ? For my part, I dare not so lightly esteem of the Church, and of the principal pillars therein.”—AYRE’s *Liturgica*.

“To say in nothing they be followed which are of the church

Their design was not, nor ought to have been, indiscriminately to abolish everything which had been in use whilst the Church groaned under the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome; or to introduce a new form of

of Rome were violent and extreme, some things they do, in that they are men; in that they are wise and Christian men, some things; some things in that they are misled and blinded with error. As far as they follow reason and truth, we fear not to tread the self-same steps wherein they have gone, and to be their followers. When Rome keepeth that which is ancienter and better, others whom we much more affect, leaving it for newer, and changing it for worse, we had rather follow the perfections of them whom we like not, than in defects resemble them whom we love."—HOOKER.

"Pure in its doctrine, apostolic in its discipline, and edifying in its ceremonies,—ceremonies which admitted of alteration according to the circumstances of time and place; we believe that the catholic and apostolic Church diffused its blessings, and preserved its orthodoxy for above four hundred years. In the dark ages of barbarism, which succeeded, we believe that it existed still\*; existed, as the Church of God, adapted to the exigencies of the time—but overgrown with corruptions, and disfigured by superstition. In such a state, we believe that it remained, polluted, but not extinct; when, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sun of learning having dawned upon Europe, its defects, which had been obscured under the cloud of darkness and ignorance, were brought to light, and betrayed themselves too obviously to be any longer tolerated. The bishops and governors of the Church of England gradually became sensible of these corruptions, \* \* \* \* but to ascertain and supply a proper remedy, was with them a work of deliberation, of labour, and of time. The rashness and presumption of other reformers both at home and abroad, in resolving at once to raze to the ground the venerable pile of their forefathers, and to build with the materials a new edifice of human invention, proved a warning to them, not afforded in vain. Venerating the fabric which had been reared by apostolic hands, they slowly and carefully removed the incrustations which disfigured it; and clearing the foundations of the rubbish which had choked them up, brought to light the great keystone of the corner, and displayed the real rock upon which it was built. Thus, the primitive and apostolic Church stood forth distinct and clear from out the ruins in which it had been long imbedded, in all the

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\* "The Church seemed like the moon to be eclipsed, but was not eclipsed; it might be overshadowed, it could not be eclipsed."—AMBROSE.

worship, but to correct and amend the old; and by purging it from the corruptions which had gradually crept into it, to render the divine service more agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the doctrine and practice of the Church in the best and purest ages of Christianity. They retained, consequently, whatever was sound and valuable, enriching it with the noble materials furnished by antiquity.

The sources from which they chiefly derived their materials were the liturgies of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, and that of Lyons in France\*, all of which can be traced back to a very early period, that of Lyons especially, its first bishop being Irenæus the disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, which latter derived its ecclesiastical traditions from St. John. In selecting from these, our reformers omitted none of the offices wherein all these churches were agreed, but where they differed from the Roman, they followed not the Roman†, but the others. Besides these, a liturgy drawn up by Melancthon and Bucer, for the use of the archbishopric of Cologne, out of ancient devotional treasures, supplied them with

dignified simplicity and majestic plainness which had obtained for it in former times the respect of the heathen and the willing blood of martyrs.”—Dr. Hook’s *Sermon at Bishop Luscomb’s Consecration*, as quoted by Bishop Jebb.

\* “From this church of Lyons, being the nearest Christian province, it seems probable that the British clergy derived their orders. It appears from BEDE’s *Ecclesiastical History*, that the ancient British liturgies differed from the Roman, and we know that this of Lyons was introduced into England in the fifth century.”—FRY’s *Church History*.

+ STILLINGFLEET.—Dr. Bennet has computed that not more than one fourteenth of our prayers are to be found in the Romish Breviary and Missal, and that these were in ancienter offices before the Romish corruptions were introduced. The latter book, the Missal, was not drawn up in fact till after our liturgy was compiled; and not sanctioned or promulgated until A.D. 1570, by a bull of Pope Pius V.—See MENDHAM’s *Life and Pontificate of Pius V.*

some hints, and at the revision of our liturgy afterwards, some additions were made from Pollanus, Calvin's successor at Strasburg.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth, there were published some treatises in *English*, called *The godly and pious Institution of a Christian Man*, containing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Commandments, and some Popish errors also, the Ave Maria, the *Seven Sacraments*, &c., which was afterwards revised under the title of *A necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*. A few years afterwards, *The King's Primer* came out, containing the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Commandments, the hymns Venite and Te Deum, and other hymns and collects. Though Henry's resentment to the Bishop of Rome induced him to authorize these preparations of the public mind, yet being no sincere friend to the Reformation, nothing more was effected in his time; but Edward the Sixth, on his accession, being firmly attached to the principles of the true religion in which he had been educated, issued orders for composing "An uniform Order of Communion according to the Rules of Scripture, and the Use of the Primitive Church." This service was accordingly provided in *English*; and the communicants for the first time understood the words of the solemn ministration, and received the cup of the Lord. Shortly afterwards, by the addition of public offices for Sundays and holydays, for Baptism, Confirmation, Burial of the Dead, and other special occasions, the whole book was completed and approved by the convocations of the clergy, and set forth by the common and full assent both of them and of the Parliament.

An impression was abroad about this time, that the liturgy had not receded far enough from Popish error: which had its source in the circumstances of

some pious and learned men having been invited over from the Continent during the troubles there at the time, to aid in its revision, who though they were the cause of alterations, some of which were improvements, yet were more actuated by prejudice in favour of certain reformed churches abroad, especially of the Calvinistic church of Geneva, than by the suggestions of a sound judgment or a sufficient knowledge of Christian antiquity. The alterations made were the omission of some rites and ceremonies, generally of little importance, and some useful matters added ; such as prefixing the sentences, exhortation, confession, and *absolution* before the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of morning and evening service, the rubric, explaining the reason of kneeling at the Lord's Supper ; the form of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons. The book so altered was called the Second Book of Edward the Sixth.

It did not long, however, continue to be used without interruption. Queen Mary repealed the statutes which authorized it, and mercilessly persecuted Protestants of all ranks and conditions, deluging the country with blood. The liturgy was expelled indeed from the churches, but not from the thoughts and affections of the sufferers, (see note, p. 9,) who during this cloud had time and occasions to appreciate its worth, and fix their attention on its merits.—The scourge however was soon removed, and Queen Elizabeth, who succeeded, showed prudence and wisdom in her measures to restore the Protestant worship, insomuch that the Romanists attended it for some years, until the pope finding the English church determined not to admit his supremacy, excommunicated her members ; the Romanists then separated from her, and they have remained ever since in this state of schism. In the year 1558, the liturgy, after

an interval of seven years, underwent its *third* revision, under another commission of learned divines, consisting of Parker, Cox, May, Bill, Pilkington, Whitehead, Grindall, Sandys, and Guest; upon which it continued in use without further alteration, during a period of forty-five years\*, until the reign of James the First.

At this time the Puritans, (a body of the clergy who had fled from the persecutions in Mary's reign to countries which conformed to the ecclesiastical establishment of Geneva, from whence they returned home, disaffected to the Church government, and dissatisfied with rites and ceremonies, and obtained their name from pretending to greater purity in the divine service,) petitioned for a reform of what they called abuses, objecting that the liturgy did not sufficiently express their *doctrinal* tenets, and that it contained some regulations not agreeable to their conscience; upon which the king appointed a conference at HAMPTON COURT between a select number of bishops and the principal leaders amongst the dissenters before himself as president†. The demands of the latter were too unreasonable to be granted, but their objections may have caused some of the improvements which followed. In the succeeding reign, owing to the machinations of sectarians, descendants of the former Puritans, the use of the liturgy (which was represented a soul-destroying compound of popery and heresy,) was prohibited under a penalty of fine and imprisonment, and a directory for worship substituted, by which the

\* See WORDSWORTH's *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, art. "Reformers in Exile."

† Much interesting information may be obtained by reading the account of this conference in SOUTHEY's *Book of the Church*, which showed the really trifling nature of the objections which the ablest Puritans could advance, as well as the learning and judgment of the king.

prayers and the quantity of Scripture to be read was left to the discretion of each officiating minister; episcopacy was abjured, the king murdered, and under the name of a popular government, the most detestable tyranny usurped the place of our free and happy constitution\*.

This ceased at the Restoration, when King Charles the Second, at the entreaty of the dissenters, held a meeting in the Savoy of an equal number of the most eminent episcopal and presbyterian divines, to make such reasonable alterations in the liturgy as they might jointly agree upon; but the latter were so little disposed to proceed in the temperate way pointed out by the king's commission (one of them having the assurance to propose substituting a liturgy of his own, composed without regard to any liturgies ancient or modern,) that nothing could be done. By the bishops, however, the following improvements were made:—several lessons in the calendar altered for others more suitable for the days; the prayers for particular occasions separated from the Litany; the prayers for Ember weeks, for the Parliament, and for all conditions of men, the general thanksgiving, the office of baptism for grown persons, prayers to be used at sea, some collects, and the service for the anniversary of King Charles' martyrdom, and the Restoration, &c., &c., added. This was the last revision† of the liturgy, when it was unanimously

\* From contemplating this and Mary's reign, we may well agree with Dr. South, that "Puritanism and Popery are like Romulus and Remus, twins suckled by the same wolf." "Schism in the Church is what rebellion is in the state, and it should be timely considered that the same principle of independence which gives birth to the one, waits only for the opportunity to bring forth the other." "Those who go greatest lengths to procure religious liberty for themselves, are least disposed to allow it to others."—DAUBENY.

† Birch, in his *Life of Tillotson*, gives a flourishing account of

subscribed by both houses of convocation of the provinces of Canterbury and York, and established by the Act of Uniformity. On this occasion the king and parliament affirmed that it was framed BY THE AID OF THE HOLY GHOST, a just encomium, and pious besides, if considered as an acknowledgment that Divine grace, if earnestly implored, will always assist the sincere endeavours and sanctify the imperfect actions of man\*.

We are not indebted for it to the Parliament of the day, as has been calumniously asserted; its origin was always strictly ecclesiastical, and its establishment from time to time, entirely catholic. It was composed and compiled under the sanction of royal authority by the apostolic governors and ministers of the Church, and then was ACCEPTED by the lay members of the Church, in parliament assembled—and since we learn from Scripture and history, that Christian princes have authority in ecclesiastical matters so far as they act not contrary to the law of God; since the crown did not exercise an unlawful authority in promoting the changes of the liturgy, and since that liturgy received the approbation and assent of the Church, it is not schismatical, uncanonical, or in any matter illegitimate; but on the contrary, is invested with that sacred and spiritual authority to which Christians are bound to yield their devoted and affectionate obedience. The "Toleration Act," as it is called, has indeed suspended the enforcement of the penalties of the Act of Uniformity, deeming such matters unfit objects for temporal coer-

the improvements made at a sixth revision of the liturgy, in William the Third's reign; but great as the names were of the persons mentioned in that commission (the labours of which were never made public,) we are slow to believe that any material alteration could be made without injury.

\* CARWITHEM's *History of the Church of England*.

cion ; and though it thus frees dissenters from being offenders against the state, notwithstanding their separation from the worship prescribed by the liturgy, yet it by no means excuses, or can excuse them from the schism they have made in the Church, and they are guilty of that sin, and will continue to be guilty of it, as long as they separate, notwithstanding any temporal authority to indemnify them.

Thus, after more than a century of trial and experience—after having been brought five times, at different intervals, under the revision of bishops and divines whose piety and theological attainments have not been surpassed, if equalled, in any country or in any age of the Christian Church—after having been subjected to continual controversy with Puritans, Presbyterians, and the various sects under the Commonwealth—after having been twice brought under the ordeal of public and solemn discussion by disputants selected from the ablest divines of the realm, after receiving the sanction of the clergy in convocation, and of the laity through the legislature—after all this time, all this investigation, all these gradual improvements, and with this authority of the Church and the state, the *Book of Common Prayer* comes before us with claims unrivalled in the history, and with excellencies not to be found in the composition, of any manual of devotion in the world. If long experience and trial—if the most profound learning, the most eminent piety, the greatest wisdom—if the sifting of the most skilful disputants—if time, labour, ability, knowledge, experience, investigation, discussion, ecclesiastical sanction, and civil enactments can stamp authority on any book—it is stamped on the *Book of Common Prayer*.

From these facts the following inferences may be drawn :—

1st. This book, by the *authority of the Church*, claims our obedience in all things not contrary to the word of God.

2nd. By the very circumstances which attended its progress, as well as by its intrinsic excellence, it claims the *veneration* and *affections* of Protestants. It ought not to be lightly objected to, and even if a specious censure is brought forward, that censure should be viewed with suspicion, as not likely to have escaped in the ordeal to which the book has been subjected, and possibly seen by the skilful compilers and revisers of it to have been founded in imperfect views of the subject.

3rd. The man who would sweep away this monument of *accumulated* piety, experience, learning, and investigation, and substitute the produce of his own single wisdom and short experience, must think *very highly* indeed of himself—whether “more highly than he ought to think,” we shall not pronounce. But Baxter, whose learning and piety no one questions, was bold enough to offer his attempt as a substitute; and in the miserable abortion he produced, left a memorial how much easier it is to censure such a masterpiece, than to perceive the defects of our own labours, or the delusive representations of our self-love and weakness.

4th. If we thus regard attempts to substitute *digested* and *elaborate* productions of men of eminent talent, in the place of this tried and well-considered form of prayer, what shall we think of the substitution of *extempore* forms—the undigested and hasty effusions of common, and, sometimes, uneducated men? Can we think that, by these the edification of Christ’s Church, or the glory of God, can be promoted better than by the *Book of COMMON PRAYER*—the work of more than a century—the result of repeated applications

of the highest learning, wisdom, and piety ; and the pure metal, after many a searching test, and many a fiery trial !

Whoever fairly examines the ecclesiastical history of England with a view to this object, will see the weaknesses of men overruled for the preservation of the purity and integrity of our liturgy ; he will see conferences, and convocations, and parliaments, all unconsciously moved by the secret springs of Providence ; he will see the friends and the foes of our establishment alike contributing to perpetuate the existence of a service whose merits neither of the contending parties was, probably, well qualified to appreciate ; and in all this he will manifestly discern the wisdom and goodness of the Most High providing for the spiritual progress and advancement of succeeding generations.

It is certain that Omnipotence does nothing in vain ; it is no less certain, that when, by various movements, Providence marks out to us a great design, we shall be involved in deep criminality, if we do not employ our best powers in the furtherance and promotion of that design. Now, such, precisely, is the case with respect to our liturgy. In its formation, it has been happily, and doubtless providentially, guarded alike from excess and from deficiency. It possesses a peculiar temperament, equally remote from all extremes, and harmoniously blending all excellencies ; it is not superstitious, it is not fanatical, it is not cold and formal, it is not rapturous and violent ; but it unites, beyond any other human composition, sublime truth and pure spirit,—the calmest wisdom, and the most energetic devotion. Under various trying circumstances it has been so signally and repeatedly preserved, that we cannot doubt it has been continued to us for some greater purpose than it has hitherto effected.

While the very memory of many contending parties that threatened its destruction have passed away, it remains uninjured, and unaltered: giving us to conjecture that it is reserved for still nobler, more extended, and more enduring triumphs, and amongst these there is one triumph in which we are, every one of us, deeply interested; its triumph, namely, over all the evils of our own hearts, and all the serious unhappiness of our lives\*.

There have been many and various proposals to make alterations in the liturgy since its last revisal in 1661, both with respect to its language and its rubrics; in most instances, however, from persons who hold erroneous notions on the doctrine of the Trinity and other important truths, and God grant that no vain delusion may ever so far prevail, as to have our liturgy new-modelled to please such, and thereby induce them to join the Church! †

\* I regret that my limits will not permit me to transcribe further from this gifted and spiritually-minded bishop, now numbered amongst the blessed.

† “This plant, of the growth of more than a thousand years, which has thriven and grown into strong maturity under the culture of many holy martyrs, many sound divines, and accomplished scholars, and over which, we may add, has shone the blessings of Providence, and have been largely shed the secret influences of the Spirit—this plant is not to be rivalled by the vain conceits of captious objectors and the upstart shoots of a presumptuous age. It is a precious and hallowed treasure. Let it be guarded as the apple of our eye.

“It is a manual of devotion, of which the consolation and the benefits enter the hearts of them who use it, as light enters the eye—as the air is breathed into the body, or as the seasons cherish the fruits of the earth.

“The bulk of mankind reap the blessings, but neither know, nor reflect on the means by which they are effected. Those whose knowledge and research enable them more clearly to trace and understand those means, most reverently admire the wisdom which produced them, and their wonderful fitness for the end for which they are destined. But others, instead of searching into the wisdom of the means, or being satisfied with the good effect they produce, are perpetually sounding their complaints, and seem

It is objected that the liturgy is too long, and full of vain repetitions\*; and repetitions there are in it, but that they are vain repetitions we deny. A vain repetition

to see no other point in the operation of nature, but some real, or seeming inconvenience, which may arise to individuals, from the general benefit. Thus, one man, instead of blessing and adoring God for his goodness and wisdom in contriving all things so wonderfully for our life and comfort, does nothing but complain of the too great heat of the sun which oppresses him, and wishes it was not so hot, or so glaring; another frets at the moisture, or the heaviness of the air; a third grumbles at the changeableness of the seasons; in short, they regard only what, from ignorance or peevishness, they think are spots, instead of being grateful for, or understanding the excellence of, the whole system. Thus it is with our Book of Common Prayer. A very large portion of the religious light which many enjoy, has been received through it—faith has been cherished, the fruits of piety and holiness have been nurtured and brought to perfection under it—the warmth of devotion has been conveyed, and suitably expressed by it—the most learned have admired it. Nevertheless, we sometimes hear nothing but complaint against this or that real or fancied defect; as if these spots were the whole system, or the whole system itself were so diseased, that any kill-or-cure quackery which may be suggested, may be tried upon it. Such is not our opinion, nor was it the opinion of the most learned and pious divines of either our, or foreign churches. We give our Amen to the following affectionate testimony of Bishop Blackall, ‘I know no prayer, necessary, that is not in the liturgy, but one; which is this—that God would vouchsafe to continue the liturgy itself in use, honour, and veneration in the Church, for ever; and I doubt not but that all wise, sober, and good Christians will give it their amen.’—BLUNT’s *History of the Reformation in England*.

\* “The length of our Church service, of which we now hear so much, and the repetitions it contains are evils, if evils they be, which a Hammond, a Sanderson, and a Taylor, could tolerate without a complaint, but too happy (as were their congregations also, for these were not fastidious days,) if they were permitted in their secret assemblies to give utterance to these burning words with which the Reformers furnished them; nor scrupulously counting how often they were taught to cry out, in the self-same phrase, for the Lord to have mercy upon them; as David counted not how often he exclaimed ‘My son, my son;’ or as these critics themselves, it is presumed, would not count their own iterations, when they were suing earnestly for their lives. Such are not vain repetitions; and it is to be hoped, that an age so little fitted for the task as this by any theological attainments, will pause before it attempts to improve upon the labours of a Cranmer, who, according to the testimony of one of the ripest scholars of his

is the unmeaning reiteration of the same name, or the same expression recurring with causeless frequency. Such as the heathen used, "O Baal, hear us," or

times, Peter Martyr, nor he by any means a creature of the archbishop, had diligently noted with his own hand every one of the Fathers; had digested into chapters, with a view to the controversies of his day, councils, canons, and Popes' decrees pertaining thereto, with a toil, and diligence, and exactness, which would seem incredible to any but an eye-witness; who, both publicly and privately, and by a marvellous strength of learning, quickness of wit, and dexterity of management, had asserted what he held to be true from the thorny and intricate cavils of sophisters.—

**STRYPE'S Cranmer.** And who pronounced, concerning this very Book of Common Prayer, 'that no man could dislike that godly book that had any godliness in him joined with knowledge.'—

**STRYPE'S Annals.** Moreover, that an age, which for a long time, unchastened by any national calamity, has suffered much of that spirit of devotion to escape which animated the holy men of old, who were ever compelled to walk with their lives in their hand, and who were, in fact, called upon at length to lay them down, will not be allowed to communicate its narcotic influence to our liturgy, and quench in any degree the ashes of the martyrs."—

**BLUNT'S History of the Reformation in England.**

*"Declaration to his late Majesty King William the Fourth, 1834.*

" We the undersigned Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy of the Irish Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland, dutifully crave permission to approach your Majesty with a declaration of our deliberate, unshaken, and cordial attachment to the polity, the doctrine, and the worship of the Church, as by law established.

" Admitted, as we have been, to the ministry of that Church, on the faith of our avowed adherence to its principles and institutions, such a declaration on our part might be deemed superfluous in ordinary seasons.

" But the times in which our lot is cast, are not of an ordinary character. We trust, therefore, that it will not be thought unbecoming in us if, actuated solely by a sense of duty, we openly make profession of our sentiments, hoping that we may thereby contribute, under the divine blessing, to check the prevailing fondness for innovation—to give mutual encouragement and support to each other—and to remove that disquietude and distrust which have been produced by the apprehension of ill advised changes in the minds of those who are committed to our spiritual care.

" We conscientiously believe that the polity of our Church is modelled, as closely as diversity of circumstances will permit, on the ecclesiastical institution founded by our Lord's apostles, and transmitted to us by their successors—that the system of our

such as the titles of saints, or the name of the Saviour, put endlessly by the R<sup>o</sup>mish mass book into the mouths of the people. None such are to be found in our liturgy. But there may be a repetition in prayer, a recurrence of the same supplication, arising from the vehement fervency of the heart. Such are in our

doctrine embodies 'the faith once delivered unto the saints'—and that our liturgy is framed after the pattern of the best remains of primitive Christianity, conveying at all times the fundamental truths of holy Scripture, and not seldom, in its express words.

"In a Church thus pure in doctrine, and apostolical in formation—whose religious services are endeared by long usage to the devotional feelings of its members, and whose polity harmonizes with the institutions of the State, to which it has ever proved itself a faithful and judicious ally, we deprecate the introduction of undefined changes and experiments; and we humbly trust that no alterations will be made in the discipline and services of our Church, but by the sanction and recommendation of its spiritual guardians.

"Should, however, abuses be found to exist in our ecclesiastical establishment, we profess our readiness to co-operate for their removal.

"But we humbly submit to your Majesty, in the language of the preface to our Book of Common Prayer, that 'Experience sheweth, that where a change hath been made of things advisedly established, no evident necessity so requiring, sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued, and those more and greater than the evils that were intended to be remedied by such change.'

"That, accordingly, it is wiser to submit to small and questionable inconvenience, than, by impatiently attempting its removal, to expose ourselves to the risk of great and undoubted evil.

"That if it be 'reasonable,' as in the language of the same preface we admit it to be, 'that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made in our forms of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, as to those that are in place of authority should, from time to time, seem either necessary or expedient,' it is no less reasonable that such alterations, as are at any time made, should be shown to be 'either necessary or expedient'; and that we do not apprehend this to have been done in respect of the changes which various persons, widely differing among themselves, are understood to have in contemplation.

"That a general agreement as to the things requiring correction, the nature and extent of such correction, and the mode of applying it, may reasonably be demanded from the person desirous

liturgy, and if this subject it to condemnation, it does the Scriptures likewise ; see Psalms xxiv. xlii. xlviij. lxxx. ciii. cvii. cxiii. cxv. cxvi. cxviii. cxxiii. cxxxvi. (the construction of which closely resembles our litany) cxlviii. cl., and the awful petitions of our suffering

of change, as an indispensable preliminary to the concurrence of others with their views.

“ That an opening once made for innovation gives occasion to alterations, not limited to the particulars which were supposed to stand in need of redress, but indefinitely extended to others, which were previously esteemed to be free from all objection.

“ And that thus, incalculable danger, arising from comparatively small beginnings, may accrue to our apostolical form of polity, and to the purity of the Christian doctrine incorporated in our public services.

“ All which is dutifully submitted, &c.”

“ With respect to the multitude of superfluous ceremonies, we have pruned away a great number of them, as we knew they were an affliction to the consciences of men, and an oppression to the Church. Yet we retain as parts of religious worship not only those ceremonies which we know to have been handed down to us from the apostles, but some others also which are thought might be observed without injury to the Church, because we were desirous that all things should be done in the holy congregation according to St. Paul’s injunction, ‘ decently and in order.’ 1 Cor. xiv. 40. But we have entirely rejected those which we saw to be grossly superstitious, or cold, offensive, and absurd, repugnant to the scriptures, or unbecoming the character of men of sober judgment.”—JEWEL’s *Apology*, Sect. 3.

“ A man that were unacquainted with the true state of our case, that should hear the bitter invectives that have been made against ceremonies, would be ready to imagine that sure our Church was nothing else but ceremonies. But he would be mightily surprised, when, upon inquiry, he should find that these ceremonies which had occasioned all this noise should be no more than *three*—the surplice, the cross after baptism, and kneeling at the Lord’s supper. He would be amazed to think that these should be the things about which so many massy books were written, so great discords and animosities raised ; such a flourishing church once quite destroyed, and now most miserably divided, after it had been so happily restored ; and his wonder must be increased, when he should perceive that of these *three* there was but *one*, and no more, in which the people were any way concerned. The cross and surplice are to be used only by the minister, and if his conscience be satisfied no man else need be disturbed about them.”—Bishop GROVE.

Lord in the garden of Gethsemane. “Repetition is natural in devotion; it is even dictated by a sense of suffering, and an acuteness of feeling. It is coldness of affection which requires to be enticed and gratified by continual novelty of idea, or expression, or action. The repetition and prolixity of pharisaical prayers, which our Lord censures, are to be understood of those prayers which run out into mere formality and into great length, no sentiment or affection of the heart accompanying them; but uttered as a task, from an opinion (of which our Lord justly notices the absurdity,) that they should really be heard for their much speaking\*.”

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### CHAPTER III.

#### PREFACES, RUBRICS, AND CALENDAR.

THERE are three prefaces to the *Book of Common Prayer*. First, “The preface added to the last review of the common prayer, to defend the reviewers from the attacks of the Presbyterians on the one hand, and of the court party on the other.” Secondly, the “Treatise concerning the Service of the Church,” designed to exhibit the superstitious and unprofitable state of the common prayer for many years, previous to its being reformed. Thirdly, the treatise “Concerning Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained,” which refers rather to the first Prayer Book in King Edward’s time, in which there were several ceremonies which are not now retained. The following passages in the first preface are particularly worthy of attention:—

\* PALEY *Sermons.*

“ Of the sundry alterations proposed unto us, we have rejected all such as were either of dangerous consequence (as secretly striking at some established doctrine or laudable practice of the Church of England, or indeed of the whole Catholic Church of Christ) or else of no consequence at all, but utterly frivolous and vain. But such alterations as were tendered to us (by what persons, under what pretences, or to what purpose soever tendered) as seemed to us in any degree requisite or expedient, we have willingly, and of our own accord assented unto: not enforced so to do by any strength of argument, convincing us of the necessity of making the said alterations: for we are fully persuaded in our judgments (and we here profess it to the world) that the book, as it stood before established by law, does not contain in it anything contrary to the word of God, or to sound doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good conscience use and submit unto, or which is not fairly defensible against any that shall oppose the same; if it shall be allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings, especially such as are set forth by authority, and even to the very best translations of the holy Scripture itself.

“ Our general aim therefore in this undertaking was, not to gratify this or that party in any their unreasonable demands; but to do that, which to our best understandings we conceive might most tend to the preservation of peace and unity in the Church; the procuring of reverence, and exciting of piety and devotion in the public worship of God; and the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavil or quarrel against the liturgy of the Church.

“ And having thus endeavoured to discharge our

duties in this weighty affair, as in the sight of God, and to approve our sincerity therein (so far as lay in us) to the consciences of all men ; although we know it impossible (in such variety of apprehensions, humours, and interests, as are in the world) to please all ; nor can expect that men of factious, peevish, and perverse spirits should be satisfied with anything that can be done in this kind by any other than themselves : yet we have good hope that what is here presented, and hath been by the Convocation of both Provinces with great diligence examined and approved, will be also well accepted and approved by all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England."

Rites and ceremonies are not unscriptural, as asserted by Protestant dissenters. The council of Jerusalem, consisting of apostles and elders, exercised authority both in matters of faith and in the regulation of the circumstantials of Christian worship, Acts, xv. 6—23. In the epistles, there are some general rules given in ritual matters that must include a great many cases : when Titus was sent to Crete, to "set in order the things that were wanting," it must imply a discretionary power to lay down such rules as the circumstances of the churches there required, and the directions, "Let all things be done decently and in order," "let all things be done to *edification*," while they fix the limits, clearly recognise a discretionary power in the Church in after times to order the circumstantials of worship as circumstances might require.

It has been denied that the passage 1 Cor. xiv. 40, has any reference to rites or ceremonies ; yet it seems nevertheless quite evident that, the "all things" refers to the matter treated of in the three last chapters of the epistle, in which there is much con-

cerning rites and ceremonies. The “in order” entirely respects discipline in the rites and ceremonies, since it has an especial regard to the ministration in the congregation. (See BLOOMFIELD’S *Recens. Syn.*)

As in many other respects our Church differs from the Church of Rome, so also in this matter of rites and ceremonies. The Church of Rome regards them as substantials and essentials of divine worship; our Church considers them as accidentals only, conducing to edification and useful to preserve order and agreement. She therefore retained a few which are mentioned by St. Basil, in the fourth century as ancient usages, and had the sanction even of Calvin, *Æcolampadius*, and Bucer.

Dissenters, much as they object to us, yet themselves exercise a discretionary power and authority in ordering the circumstantials of Christian community and worship, and enjoin tests of membership and observe practices for which they have no warrant in the word of God.

There are “Rubrics” mentioned in the preface to the *Book of Common Prayer*, being those occasional directions and rules, for the manner, time, place, &c., of performing divine service, given throughout the book, now printed in italic characters, but formerly in red letters, whence they derive their name, the Latin word *ruber*, signifying *red*.

The CLERGY are bound to conduct their public ministrations by the rubrics: not only by the authority of the state and likewise of their spiritual rulers, but also by their subscriptions, and their solemn and express engagements and stipulations at their ordinations so to do, and from which, consequently, they cannot be justified in deviating, by either their own private judgment, the solicitations of

their parishioners, example of others, or even the example and authority of their superiors in the Church (supposing an exercise of such authority).

The LAITY also should pay attention to them, remembering that they contain the directions of that Church to which Christ hath left authority to see that all things be done in order and to edification, and to decree rites and ceremonies for that end,—remembering, moreover, the subject to which they relate—the worship and service of Almighty God—their communion with Him in matters which concern *the welfare and salvation of their immortal souls*, they should not offer to their heavenly King, their blessed Redeemer, the Holy Spirit of grace and sanctification, the slight which they would fear to offer to an earthly monarch. They should not insult Him, by not taking the trouble to read and understand the directions of His Church, or despising and disobeying them, but *obeying them reverently and affectionately*, with a mind impressed with the solemn nature of the service, and a heart full of love and awe of the Great Being who is the object of it.

Supposing that in some instances the rubric appears uncertain and deficient; resort should be had to the ordinary—that is the bishop of the diocese—the person having ordinary jurisdiction, who has authority “to appease all diversity, if any arise, and to resolve all doubts concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*, so that the order be not contrary to anything contained in it.” (Preface concerning the Service of the Church.)

The translation of the Psalms followed in the *Book of Common Prayer*, is that of the “Bible set forth and used in the time of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, by Tyndall and Coverdale, and

revised by Cranmer." The use of this was superseded by our own improved and authorized version, but in the Prayer Book, the old version of the Psalms was retained, because being less fettered with the Hebrew idiom, and having more regard to the genius of our language, it was better adapted for the purposes of devotion than the later translation.

There is a peculiar propriety in repeating the doxology after each psalm. Inasmuch as the mystery of the Holy Trinity is more explicitly revealed to us under the gospel, than it was under the law, it is annexed to signify our belief that the same God was worshipped by them as by us: the same God that is glorified in the psalms having been from the beginning, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as well as now. So that our ascribing this glory expressly to the three persons in whose name we are baptized, is not any real addition to the psalms, but necessary for turning the Jewish psalms into Christian hymns, and fitting them for the use of the Church now, as before they were fitted for the service of the synagogue.

Christians observe their sabbath on a different day of the week from that of the Jews: the reason why the Jews were commanded to observe the seventh day or Saturday, in particular, for their sabbath, was peculiar to themselves. It was on this day God had delivered them from Egyptian bondage; but this deliverance by the ministry of Moses was only intended for a type and pledge of a spiritual deliverance which was to come by Christ: their Canaan, also, was no more than a type of that heavenly Canaan, which the redeemed by Christ look for. Since, therefore, the shadow is made void by the coming of the substance, the relation is changed; and God is no more to be worshipped and believed in as a God foreshowing and assuring by types, but as a God who hath performed

the substance of what he promised. Christians, indeed, as well as the Jews, are bound by the everlasting obligation of the command, written by the finger of God, which can never be disannulled, to observe the moral equity of the commandment, and after six days spent in their own works, are to sanctify the seventh; but in the designation of the particular day, they may, and ought to, differ. For if the Jews were to sanctify the seventh day, only because they had on that day a temporal deliverance as a pledge of a spiritual one, Christians, surely, have much greater reason to sanctify the first, since on that very day God redeemed us from spiritual thraldom, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, and begetting us, instead of "an earthly Canaan, to an inheritance incorruptible in the heavens," and accordingly, we have the concurrent testimony of scripture and antiquity that the first day of the week, or Sunday, hath ever been the stated and solemn time of the Christians meeting for their public worship and service. *Acts ii. 1; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10.*

Some account of the history of the calendar may be interesting. The Christian year, in its divisions, followed the year as settled by Julius Cæsar, (hence called the Julian year,) consisting of three hundred and sixty-five days for three successive years, and of three hundred and sixty-six in the fourth year, which is termed leap-year. But the year being eleven minutes too long, or one day in one hundred and twenty-nine years, it was found, in 1582, that the time for celebrating the Church festivals had advanced ten days beyond the period fixed by the Council of Nice: to remedy which, *Gregory XIII.*, ordered, in 1582, that the 15th of October should be counted instead of the 5th, for the future; and to prevent the recurrence of this error, it was determined that the year beginning a

century should not be leap year, with the exception of that beginning each fourth century. This amended, or new style, was not adopted in this country till 1752, when a new calendar, tables, and rules, were prefixed to our liturgy, by which provision is made not only for the celebration of Easter on a day to be regulated by a certain full moon, but likewise for finding the time of the full moon in which the same dependeth.

The calendar consists of several columns. The first shows the days of the months in their numerical order: the second contains the letters of the alphabet affixed to the several days of the week: the third, as printed in the larger prayer book, has the calends, nones, and ides, which was the method of computation by the ancient Romans and primitive Christians, and is still useful to those who read ecclesiastical or profane history. The four last columns contain the course of lessons for ordinary days throughout the year, the intermediate column, namely the fourth, containing the holydays.

The keeping of holydays does not subject our Church to the censure of the apostle, Gal. iv. 2; for the days, the observation of which was condemned in this passage, were those of the Jews, such as new moons, sabbatical years, &c., which, though abrogated, the Jewish teachers attempted to impose on the Galatians as necessary to salvation. These being only shadows of things to come, were made void by the coming of the substance; and the observance of them, therefore, had the appearance of apostasy to Judaism, which made the apostle afraid that they would depart from the faith, and that his labours for their salvation would be vain. God himself ordained several feasts in memory of particular benefits; as those of the Passover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles; and our Saviour sanc-

tioned a feast of the Church's institution, that of the feast of Dedication, as also that of Purim, Esth. ix. 27, and which the Scriptures do not state to have been appointed by divine command, and he consecrated anew those of the Passover and of Pentecost, by the resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit on those days respectively. We learn from ecclesiastical historians that the primitive Christians kept anniversaries. We have positive evidence that both Easter and Whitsuntide were observed in the second century, which is presumptive evidence that they were observed before.

That several Popish holydays were retained in our calendar may be accounted for by their having been useful in regulating law terms, and payment of rent, or forming anniversaries of national observance, or connected with popular feeling. Most of them have now grown obsolete, and might be omitted. Besides the more solemn festivals whereon they celebrated the mysteries of their redemption, the primitive Christians observed days set apart, yearly, in commemoration of the apostles and martyrs, at whose graves they met once a year, to celebrate their virtues, and to bless God for their holy lives and glorious deaths; a practice probably founded upon that exhortation to the Hebrews to "remember those who had the rule over them, and who had spoken unto them the word of God, and had sealed it with their blood." Heb. xiii. 7. Those days of the martyrs' deaths were called their birth-days; because they looked upon those as the days of their nativity, whereon they were freed from the pains and sorrows of a troublesome world, and born again to the joys and happiness of an endless life. These yearly solemnities were afterwards observed with so much care and strictness, that it was thought profaneness to be absent from the Christian assemblies

upon those occasions. The following ages, however, being also forward in celebrating the festivals, martyrs, and holy men, of their time, the observation of holy-days became both superstitious and troublesome ; a number of dead men's names, not over eminent for sense or morals, crowding the calendar and displacing the festivals of the first saints and martyrs. At the reformation of the Church, all these modern martyrs were thrown aside, and no festivals retained, but such as were dedicated to the honour of Christ, &c., or to the memory of those that were famous in the Gospel, such as the twelve apostles, who, being constant attendants on our Lord, have a day assigned to each ; St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen, likewise,—the first, because he was Christ's forerunner, the latter on account of his being the first martyr ; St. Paul and St. Barnabas are commemorated on account of their extraordinary call ; St. Mark and St. Luke for the service they did Christianity by their Gospels ; the Holy Innocents, because they were the first that suffered on our Saviour's account, as also for the greater solemnity of Christians, the birth of Christ being the occasion of their deaths. The memory of all other pious persons is celebrated together upon the festival of All Saints : and that the people may know what benefit Christians receive by the ministry of angels, the feast of St. Michael and all angels is, for that reason, solemnly observed in the Church. These days were constantly observed in the Church from the days of the Reformation to the great Rebellion, when it could not be expected that anything which bore an air of religion or antiquity could bear up against such an inundation of impiety and confusion. But at the Restoration, our holydays were again revived, together with the liturgy, which appoints a proper collect, epistle, and gospel, for each of them : and orders the " curate to declare to

the people on the Sunday before what holydays or fasting days are in the week following to be observed."

—*Rubric of the Nicene Creed.*

When a holyday happens on a Sunday there have been different opinions as to which service should be read. Some take no notice of the holyday, and use the service for the Sunday, alleging that the holyday, which is of human institution, should give way to the Sunday, which is allowed to be of divine; but this argument is not satisfactory: for though the observation of Sunday be of divine institution, yet the service we use on it is of human appointment. Nor is there anything in the service appointed to be used on ordinary Sundays, that is more peculiar to, or tends to the greater solemnity of the Sunday than any of the services appointed for the holydays. What slight, therefore, do we show to our Lord's institution, if, when we meet on the day that he has set apart for the worship of himself, we praise him for the eminent virtues which shined forth in some saint, whose memory that day brings to our mind? Such praises are so agreeable to the duty of the day, that it seems a becoming practice to make the lesser holyday give way to the greater: as an ordinary Sunday, for instance, to a saint's day; a saint's day, to one of our Lord's festivals; and a lesser festival of our Lord to a greater: except that some, if the first lesson for the holyday be from the Apocrypha, will join the first lesson of the Sunday to the holyday service: as observing that the Church, by always appointing canonical scripture upon Sundays, seems to countenance their use of a canonical lesson even upon a holyday that has a proper one appointed out of the Apocrypha, if that holyday shall happen upon a Sunday.

The sacred events which the Church commemo-  
rates are admirably adapted to instruct and edify her

members. She begins her annual course by looking towards the dawn of the Son of Righteousness, directing our attention to the FIRST ADVENT of her Lord in humility, and beyond that, to his SECOND ADVENT in glory. She then leads us to contemplate his lowly NATIVITY, and the inestimable blessings of peace on earth and good will towards men connected with it. Then she brings before us his CIRCUMCISION, his first act of obedience to the law for our sakes. She next proceeds, in the EPIPHANY, the birth-day of the Gentile Church, to place before us some of the most remarkable manifestations of the incarnate God, in his miracles and his holy doctrines. After this she draws us aside from the busy world to behold her Lord's mysterious TEMPTATION and his triumph over the tempter, desiring us during the penitential season of LENT to imbibe his self-denying spirit; and now she approaches, step by step, her Saviour's PASSION, marking each day of suffering with an appropriate service, and teaching us in all our sorrows to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, " who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." Still further she follows him even to the silent TOMB, and bids us " come and see the place where the Lord lay;" and after the great work of our redemption is thus finished, she greets us in the glorious morn of EASTER with the joyous salutation—The Lord is risen, the Lord is risen indeed! at the same time admonishing us, " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." She lingers with her Lord during his passing visits to this lower world after his resurrection; and on ASCENSION-day, having caught the last glimpse of him ascending to glory, she waits till the Comforter is come, whom her Lord promised to send from the Father, even the

Spirit of Truth ; and on WHITSUNDAY hails the fulfilment of that promise, in the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and in his continual presence with his Church. She then closes her heavenly course by directing us to meditate with the profoundest reverence upon the glorious mystery of the TRINITY ; and leads us to the throne of the Most High, inviting us to join the choir of the blessed spirits above in ascribing glory, and honour, and power to Him “ who has created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created.” But lest we should falter in the high, but arduous career which our Lord has opened to us, thinking it too much for human weakness to tread in his steps, we are cheered on from time to time with the illustrious examples who have run the race that is set before us, and through faith and patience have inherited the promises.

Is not this a full and striking exhibition of the Christian system ? and is it not admirably calculated to bring before us, year after year, the principal facts of the gospel history, and the important doctrines connected with those facts ! Does it cherish a spirit of patriotism to commemorate the eras of our country’s glory ? and shall it not cherish a spirit of piety to commemorate the eras on which signal blessings were conferred upon the Church universal ?

These festivals of the Church are also a guide and directory to her ministers. If left to themselves, they might dwell too exclusively on some particular topics ; for every one, according to his turn of mind, has some subject on which he feels himself most at home in expatiating, and which he is liable to bring forward to the neglect of others equally important. Now, the full and comprehensive developement of divine truth which our Church lays before us in her festivals, is the

best corrective that could have been devised against this tendency ; for if her ministers rightly attend to her suggestions they will be enabled, as faithful and wise stewards, to give to every one his portion in due season.

If this system shows the wisdom of the Church, it also points out the importance of her members acting in conformity with it. We should be on our guard against modern innovations in this matter, and not quietly suffer these sacred days to pass by unobserved. The principal festivals, indeed, are generally regarded ; but it is to be feared that the saint's days are often overlooked. But why should this be ? Where it is impracticable to attend public worship, the collect, epistle, and gospel for the day should be used in our private or family devotions. If the privileges which our Church affords are great, let us remember that our responsibilities are proportionable ; if she introduces us to the “ glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs,” it is not that we may boast of the high communion to which we are admitted ; nor is it that we may, with a voluntary humility, give them the worship due to God only ; it is not to honour the creature that they are had in remembrance, but rather to supply us with continual incentives for adoring Almighty God, who, through his grace, has given us such blessed examples, and to inspire us with a holy emulation to aim at following them as they followed Christ. If we observe *these festivals in such a spirit, we shall keep equally distant from a superstitious reverence of the saints, and a profane contempt of them, and having honoured them here in the only way we can, by endeavouring to imitate them, be permitted hereafter to join the glorious and blessed company, who came out of great tribulation, and have washed*

their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb\* !

The occasion of the rule being framed for the time of the celebration of Easter, was a great difference which arose on this subject between the churches of Asia and other churches. The former kept their Easter upon the same day on which the Jews celebrated their passover, namely, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, (which month began at the new moon next to the vernal equinox,) and this they did upon what day of the week soever it fell ; and were from thence called “ Quartodecimans,” or such as kept Easter on the 14th day after the appearance of the moon. Whereas the other churches, especially those of the West, did not follow this custom, but kept their Easter on the Sunday following the Jewish passover ; partly the more to honour this day, and partly to distinguish between Jews and Christians. Both sides pleaded apostolical tradition, these latter pretending to derive their practice from St. Peter and St. Paul : whilst the others, namely, the Asiatics, said they imitated the example of St. John.

This difference at length becoming the cause of disturbance in the Church, Constantine got a canon passed at the general council of Nice, “ That everywhere the great feast of Easter should be observed upon one and the same day ; and that not on the day of the Jewish passover, but, as had been generally observed, on the Sunday afterwards,” and that the dispute might never arise again, these paschal canons were established :—

1st. That the 21st March shall be accounted the vernal equinox.

\* The foregoing remarks are derived from the Rev. G. PRESTON WRIGHT of Hackney. See also Cycle of the Churche's Services in *Rosebuds Rescued*, by S. C. WILKS.

2nd. That the full moon, happening upon, or next after, 21st March, shall be taken for the full moon of Nisan.

3rd. That the Lord's day next following that full moon be Easter-day.

4th. But if the full moon happen upon Sunday, Easter-day shall be the Sunday after. Agreeably to these is the rule for finding Easter, still appointed by the Church.

The Christian year is divided into two parts ; the one, from Advent to Trinity, to commemorate Christ's living here on earth ; the other, from Trinity to Advent, to direct us to live after his example. It does not correspond with the civil year, because the Church, in numbering her days, and measuring her seasons, does not so much regard the sun in the firmament, as the Sun of Righteousness, her Saviour ; counting on her year from him, who began at the season of Advent to rise upon the world, and as the " Day star on high," to enlighten them that sat in spiritual darkness.

Vigils were the meetings of the early Christians for the exercise of devotion, so called from being held before day, on account of the persecutions of their enemies ; and when this first occasion ceased, by the Christians having liberty given them to perform their devotions in a more public manner, they still continued these night-watchings before certain festivals, in order to prepare their minds for a due observation of the ensuing solemnity. But afterwards, when these meetings came to be so far abused, that no care could prevent irregularities, the Church thought fit to abolish them ; so that the nightly watchings were laid aside, and the fasts only retained, but still keeping the former name of vigils. Vigils, fasts, and other days of abstinence are not distinguished in our Church from each other, though the Church of Rome makes a distinction between them.

Some of the festivals have no *vigils* before them, because they generally happen either between Christmas and the Purification, or between Easter and Whitsuntide, which were always esteemed such seasons of joy that the Church did not think fit to intermingle them with any days of fasting and humiliation. There are, indeed, two holydays which have no vigils, namely, St. Michael and All Angels, and St. Luke. On the former the season for the institution of vigils ceaseth, which was to conform us to the example of the saints, and remind us of the mortifications and sufferings they underwent on their way to the possession of the glory which we on their festivals are invited to commemorate; whereas those ministering spirits had never partaken of mortality or its troubles, and had no previous struggles with sin and evil, but were created at first in full possession of bliss. St. Luke has no vigil, because the eve of it was formerly itself a holyday called the Feast of St. Ethelred.

The holydays are not all of the same nature, some are festivals or days of joy, others are fasts or days of sorrow. Some feasts and holydays are called moveable, because there is no particular day of the year fixed for them, the day on which they fall being moved or varied according as Easter falls sooner or later.

The *usefulness* of mortifying the body by fasting or abstinence will be evident from the following considerations. The Christian is in a peculiar condition, arising from the corruption of his nature, "whereby the lusts of the flesh is not subject to the law of God," Art. 9. "The flesh lusteth (striveth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other," Gal. v. 17. He is a spiritual man, and yet walking in the flesh, which is rebellious and intractable. This seems to suggest the advantage, if

not the necessity, of mortifying the body, which is the medium of temptation to the spirit; and though the mortifying our appetites, be in the rank of bodily exercises, which, St. Paul says, of themselves profit little, yet they accustom us to acts of self-denial in inferior instances, and are useful in the design of mortifying sensual lusts.

There does not appear in the New Testament any express command on this subject, the reason of which probably is, that being valuable *only* as a means to a further end, it is in itself, if that end be lost sight of, an utterly worthless observance, vain and superstitious. Our Lord, however, joins it with almsgiving and prayer, and gives directions concerning the practice itself, and he was pleased to give us an extraordinary example in his own person, by fasting forty days and forty nights. Moreover, he expressly predicts, that a time should come when he, the bridegroom, should be taken from them, and then should they fast in those days; and "our Lord and Saviour," says Hooker, "would not teach the manner of doing, much less purpose a reward for doing, that which were not both holy and acceptable in God's sight." Accordingly the apostles left us an example of this practice, St. Peter, Acts, x. 10. The prophets and teachers at Antioch, Acts, xiii. 2. Paul and Barnabas, Acts, xiv. 23. St. Paul and his fellow-labourers approved themselves as the ministers of God "in fastings," 2 Cor. vi. 5; and St. Paul tells us, that he aimed to protect himself against temptation through means of mortification and abstinence, 1 Cor. ix. 27\*.

Our Church differs materially from that of Rome with regard to fasting. The Romish church by vain distinctions between meats, forbidding flesh on certain

\* For an account of the periodical fasts of the primitive Christians, see BINGHAM's *Antiquities*, book 21.

days, but allowing pleasant food of other qualities, has perverted the design of fasting, and brought in many superstitious usages. Our Church, whilst it guards against such corruptions, has retained, as useful to be observed, the seasons of fasting and humiliation which were sanctioned by antiquity, and recommended by the experience of their usefulness\*. In the homily on the subject, she states the profitable ends to which fasting may be directed, and in her collect for the first Sunday in Lent, bids us pray for “grace to use such abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may ever obey the godly motions of the Lord, in righteousness and true holiness.” But she lays no stress upon the act itself of fasting—appoints no precise rule as *how* Christians ought to fast,—no distinction of meats—exacts no precise measure of mortification. This might have been a snare to the conscience. It is to be a spiritual exercise, and must be left therefore to the Christian

\* “When we read the records of the early Church, we find truly that the holiness of the primitive saints was something very different from ours. In self-denial they could say with St. Paul, that they were in watchings and fastings often, and with the bold apostle could protest that they died daily, that they kept their minds and bodies, and brought them into subjection. We, on the contrary, gather our comforts, our luxuries, and elegances about us, dwell in the midst of softness and self-indulgence, and would fain flatter ourselves all the while that we are treading in the steps of the Son of God, who for our sakes, yet not surely that we should wax wanton in our liberty, led a life of trial and suffering, poverty and contempt, mortification and austerity. Such too, in their measure like their Master, were the bright lights of primitive antiquity. The time would fail me to tell of martyrs and confessors, bishops and doctors, who through the might of early piety and in the freshness of early faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, received in torture the bright red crown of martyrdom, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. There was a healthy vigour and hardiness, a zeal and a roughness, chaste, severe, and uncompromising, that contrasts strangely with the feeble and effeminate piety of modern times.”—F. W. FABER, University College, Oxford.

discretion of one who is “walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

The advantages which attention to the regulations of the church in this matter would tend to realize are, a more uniform and regular observance of an injunction of our Saviour; a deeper humiliation, and a more chastened spirit; a more thorough insight into ourselves, and a closer communion with our God; a more resolute and consistent practice of self-denying charity; a more lively realizing of things spiritual, and a warning to the world of God’s truth and its own peril. This periodical chastening and self-restraint in whatever an individual was tempted to over-indulge, would be more productive of good effects than the modern abstinence or temperance societies; for it would be acting in obedience to an ordinance of the Church which was sanctioned by our Lord and his apostles, and observed in the purest days of Christianity, instead of following a scheme of man’s contrivance, which rests merely upon voluntary association and temporary excitement\*.

Lent is the season of forty days, excluding Sundays, which precede Easter. The earlier part of this solemn season is intended to prepare us for the great week of our LORD’S PASSION, with which it concludes, and the space of forty days seems marked out as a proper period for fasting and humiliation by the instances not only of Moses and Elias, but of ONE far greater than they, who prepared himself for the commencement of his ministry by a fast of forty days in the wilderness. It derives its name from an old Saxon word signifying spring.

The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, or the ascension of our Lord, are styled Rogation days. In these fasts the Church had

\* *British Magazine*, June, 1838.

regard, not only to prepare our minds to eelebrate the Ascension after a devout manner, but also by frequent prayer and humiliation to appease God's wrath, and deprecate his displeasure, that so he might avert the judgments which the sins of the nation deserved ; that he might be pleased to bless the fruits with which the earth is at this time covered, and not pour upon it those scourges of his wrath, pestilence and war, which usually begin at this season. These extraordinary prayers and supplications are by the Greeks called "Litanies," but by the Latins, "Rogations."

The seven days of the week, reckoned as beginning on the 1st of January, are designated by the letters A, B, C, &c., and the one which denotes Sunday is the Dominical letter. Thus if the year begins on Sunday, A is the Dominical letter, if it begins on Monday, G, and so on. If there were exactly fifty-two weeks, or 364 days in the year, the Dominical letter would be always the same ; but there being one day and a quarter more, makes it vary.

At the end of every nineteen years the new and full moons happen at very nearly the same time of the year. The ancients discovered this, and reckoned the nineteen years, or "cycle of the moon," so that it terminated the year before the Christian era. The number of the year in this cycle is called *the golden number* from its being marked by the Greeks in letters of gold.

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## THE DAILY OFFICES.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ORDER FOR MORNING PRAYER.

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE place in which we offer our public devotions is called *Church*, being a corrupt or altered form of an old Greek word signifying the “house of the Lord,” a name peculiarly appropriate to the place of worship of the professing disciples of Him whom the Scriptures entitle “*the Lord*.”

That the presence of God is vouchsafed in a special manner to places dedicated to his service, we may learn from the Scriptures; for though what Solomon states, and St. Stephen also in reference to Solomon, that the “Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,” be true in a strict and proper sense, inasmuch as no space can confine Him who occupieth and filleth infinity, yet it is however no less true in a certain sense that He doth indeed dwell with men on the earth in temples made with hands. So Solomon asserts in the same prayer at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 2. And God Himself is introduced as saying the same in the 132nd Psalm,— “The Lord hath chosen Sion: He hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” And so we read that when the prayer of dedication was concluded by Solomon, God testified his presence in the temple by a visible mark, “The priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord

had filled the house of God:" the Master, as hath been well observed, thus took possession of his house, and for a time dispossessed even his own servants, to show that he did so; thereby declaring that what had been with such solemnity appropriated to his service, it was his pleasure to accept and to bless; and that He did not intend to neglect it in after times, but that He purposed to vouchsafe to it his peculiar presence, appear from his own subsequent declaration. For as Moses had long before announced to the Israelites that the Lord their God should choose out of all their tribes a place to put his name there, which should be in a special sense "his habitation," and whither they should come with their religious offerings; so now we find the Lord Himself signifying this his choice to Solomon,— "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place, for now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name be there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."

Thus was the presence of God vouchsafed to his people, under the old covenant, in the place specially dedicated to his service; and accordingly the temple is continually mentioned under the appellations of "the house of God," Ezra v. 15; "the habitation of God's holiness," 2 Chron. xxx. 27; "the place where his honour dwelleth," Ps. xxvi. 8: phrases, the propriety of which is recognized by our blessed Saviour, who calleth the temple expressly "his Father's house," John ii. 16; and let us not think that he is less with us than he was with Israel; let it not be supposed that the Christian Church is less favoured than was the Jewish Church, or that we have lost any spiritual privilege by the incarnation of the Son of God. Rather, as the Apostle argues, "if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministr-

tion of righteousness exceed in glory ;" and so our blessed Lord, who is one with the Father, hath not failed to declare graciously in general terms, " where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ;" or to promise more particularly to those whom He hath charged with the ministry of reconciliation by his Gospel, " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Attendance upon the public worship of God is obligatory on all Christians. It is shown to be so from the example of the apostles, combined with the apostolical precept, " not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some was," Heb. x. 5—a precept which appears to have assumed the general prevalence of the practice amongst the professors of the Gospel; and whilst it positively enjoined the duty of associating with the religious assemblies of their brethren, conveyed an expressive animadversion and censure on those who were wilfully absent. But had no such express direction been found in the New Testament, the very reasonableness of the practice, and the spirit of our religion, would have taught us the usefulness, nay, the necessity of it. What form of religion could exist without some public observance of its worship, some common point in which its followers might associate, and by open example profess its obligations and manifest their common interest in its hopes and privileges ? The Christian churchman cannot look upon himself as a mere solitary being having no person with whom he is spiritually concerned. He sees that the whole spirit of his religion is *love*, that the Author of it is *love*, that the very bond of it is *love*. He sees that he is a *brother* in that holy *family* of which Jesus Christ is the first-born, of which God is the Father, and in which the unity is the unity of the spirit. He sees

himself, too, described (and if he knows anything of his religion, he knows and feels that he is) a member of that spiritual body in which every member has an interest and sympathy in the benefits, the wants, the pleasures, and pains of the whole. That if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, the other members rejoice with it. Such a person, the member of such a family, and such a body, cannot need to be told that not only private, but also public prayers must be part of his duty—that he has subjects of prayers which must become him not only in his individual but in his social capacity. Every one has his private necessities, his private blessings, his private hopes, fears, and joys; but if he is a Christian, he must have also his social ones. Does he truly acknowledge himself to be a member of Christ's family, the Church, and has he nothing in connexion with his brethren in that family, for which he ought to join with them in prayer and praise to God? Has he no public acknowledgments to make to Him? Can he expect a blessing upon the church and nation to which he belongs, any more than upon individuals, if that church and nation shall not collectively approach him as he has directed—in public prayer—and confess to him collectively with public praise and thanksgiving? And if it be the duty of the Church in general, upon what pretence can any individual (unless upon urgent cause or absolute bodily want of power) presume that he is to be exempted from the general rule? For there is no respect of *persons* in religious duties; if *one* man be excused, *all* are excused; consequently, if one man may lawfully absent himself, *all* may, and there would be no public worship. But it may be said, "I can pray and praise at home, as well as at Church." The question is not whether you *can*, but whether you

*ought*: you know that you ought to pray, and praise God *both* in private and also in the congregation. Do you not know that the refusal to pray at church is itself an act of disobedience to God's word, to Christ's ministers, and to the lawful authority of his Church? You cannot pray at home as well as at church: Jesus has given no promise to such a solitary and selfish worshipper—the Holy Spirit will be grieved by such perverseness—his grace will not sanctify your prayers—his blessing will not follow them. Do you not know also, full well, that *reluctance* to pray with the congregation, too often is a sure token of indolence, love of the world, indifference to the salvation of your soul, coldness in God's service, and feebleness of faith, which will end in your not praying at all, either at home or at church? But if you could and would pray at home *as well* as at church, your Almighty and all-seeing Lord requires both private and public, both individual and social worship\*.

We have encouragements to practise this duty in the causes of gladness which accompany the going into the house of the Lord, arising out of the uses to which our going thither may be made conducive. A source of gladness is found in the reflection that we are engaged in performing a duty to God. "Our rejoicing," as the apostle says, "is this, the testimony of a good conscience," 2 Cor. i. 12. It is a source of gladness also to reflect, that the duty in which we are thus engaged, is one whereby we follow the footsteps of the holy men of God who have gone before us, of the patriarchs and the prophets, the apostles and the martyrs of ancient times, a "cloud" of illustrious "witnesses," who compass us about in imagination, and animate us, by the beauty of their example, to devo-

\* For further considerations, see an admirable Sermon on the subject by Archdeacon Berens.

tion in the house and service of God. It is a source of gladness also to bear in mind, that this duty is a commencement here of similar occupations in that future state, which is the object of our liveliest aspirations; for of that state it will be one of the chief, and most glorious, and most delightful employments, to serve God continually with "the spirits of just men made perfect, the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven," and with "an innumerable company of angels," Heb. xii. 22, 23. It is a source of gladness also to consider, that meanwhile we are associated here on earth in our devotions with those with whom we shall be most delighted to resume the same heavenly employment; that with them with whom we are now connected by life's most endearing charities, we are "taking sweet counsel together, and walking in the house of God as friends," Ps. xxxi. 13. And may we not esteem it an additional source of gladness, that we have unseen witnesses and partakers of our adorations in some of those "ministering spirits," Heb. i. 14, who "fill the heavenly temple of the Lord," Isai. vi. 1, and are continually crying one to another and celebrating his praises in hymns of glory, which the Church takes for her pattern upon earth. But more abundant than all this is the source of gladness springing from the consideration, that in the house of the Lord, the Lord himself is peculiarly present with his faithful worshippers; that as he promised to the Israelitish Church of old, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee," Exod. xx. 24, so he will continually, in such places, "come" to his assembled servants, and "will bless them;"—that as he promised to the first members of the Christian Church, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"

Matt. xviii. 20, so his presence may ever be confidently expected "in the midst of those" who are "gathered together," and offer "in his name" their devotions in his Father's house;—that as he promised the apostles, the first ministers of the gospel, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20, so he may at all times be assuredly presumed to be with their legitimate successors in their ministrations for the benefit of his Church;—that as he appointed his own ordinances for the observance of his people, and annexed to them the promise of corresponding blessings, so he must be regarded as ever at hand to confirm his promise and bestow his blessing upon those who wait upon him in his house by prayer, by praises, by hearing his holy word, by partaking of his holy sacraments,—in short, by his own several appointed means of grace. Thus, whether we have regard to the memorial of his name in his sanctuary, or to the gathering together of his people in his name, or to the commission of his ministers, or to the grace of his holy institution, we have reason to be assured that the presence of the Lord himself, and together with that, all needful blessings, are vouchsafed in his house to his faithful worshippers. And what more powerful motive can we have for resorting to the place where his presence is vouchsafed, and adopting the profession of the holy Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord?" But together with these considerations, the very character of the house of God, and still more, the celebration of those rites which are administered in it, are calculated in their administrations to be productive of the most heartfelt comfort and substantial joy; "Them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer," Isa. lvi. 7. Joyfulness is thus promised to those who fre-

quent the house of God,—here described with reference to one of the principal duties for which it is intended,—namely, as his “house of prayer;” and the promise doubtless is fulfilled, and many, I trust, can bear witness to the fulfilment, by the operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of those who seek with diligence the places dedicated to his service, and devoutly join in the services there celebrated to his honour according to the rites and ceremonies of our scriptural and apostolical Church\*.

There is precedent in Scripture for set times of public worship: God appointed his peculiar people, the Jews, to have morning services day by day, and that upon the Sabbath-day they should be twice as long as upon other days, Numb. xxviii. 9, 10; 1 Chron. xxiii. 30; where we read that the office of the Levites was to stand every morning to give God thanks, and to praise the Lord likewise at even. We find express testimony that at a very early period in the history of Christianity, they met not only on Sundays, but *every day*, for the public worship of God; and at a later period the very order of such service is given in detail.

The ancient hours of prayer in the British and other Western churches were seven in number†:

\* “Lord, I have loved thy assemblies: I have mourned for the divisions of thy Church: I have delighted in the brightness of thy sanctuary. This vine (the Church of England) which thy right hand hath planted in this nation, I have ever prayed unto thee that it might have the first and the latter rain, and that it might stretch her branches to the seas and to the floods. Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. *I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; but I have found Thee in Thy temples.*”—Lord Chancellor BACON, 1626.

† “The probable reason for this particular number was a *literal* interpretation and application of the words of the Psalmist, ‘Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.’ These frequent prayers seem to have been practised chiefly in monasteries and convents, where most other occupations being excluded, a larger portion of their time was devoted to religious exercises.”—Dr. CHANDLER’s *Sermon*.

matins, (formerly divided into nocturns or vigils, and matin lauds;) prime, or the first hour of prayer; the third, sixth, and ninth hours; vespers or even-song; and compline at bed-time. Our Church has only prescribed public worship in the morning and evening; and in making this regulation she was perfectly justified; for though it is the duty of Christians to pray continually, yet the precise times and seasons of prayer, termed canonical hours, do not rest on any divine command, nor have they ever been pronounced binding on all churches by any general council; neither has there been any uniformity in the practice of the Christian Church in this respect. The office for matins, or morning prayer, according to our Church, is a judicious abridgement of her ancient services for matins, lauds, and prime, and the office of even-song or evening prayer, in like manner, is an abridgement of the ancient service for vespers and compline. Both these offices have, however, received several improvements in imitation of the ancient discipline of the churches of Egypt, Gaul, and Spain. Our Church has not appointed any particular hour when morning and evening prayer should begin, but has left the determination thereof to the governors of the Church, who appoint it according to the circumstances of respective places. Care should be taken, however, that morning prayers be read before, and evening prayers after noon.

The neglect of the *daily service* may be attributed in some degree to that undue importance which is attached to *preaching*, so that it is hardly thought worth the time and trouble to go to the house of God merely for the purpose of offering up prayers and thanksgivings to Him, and the only part of divine service that excites and interests is the sermon. It may also be partly ascribed to our busy and restless

habits, according to which some are so much occupied, and others fancy themselves so much occupied, that they have no time for a frequent performance of their religious homage to God, while a much greater number abstain from the practice merely from the habit of following the general example, and of doing or not doing what they see their neighbours do or neglect to do. The main cause, however, is the decay of piety, that general relaxation of devotional feeling which makes us, with the name of religion perpetually in our mouths, with a sort of eager and restless spirit respecting the things pertaining to God, really less sensible than our simple and unpretending forefathers of the value and efficacy of prayer, confession, praise, thanksgiving, and intercession, taken by themselves, offered without any other accompaniment, by grateful hearts, before the throne of Almighty God. For it is well worthy of observation, that this subtraction of the honour due to our Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier in heaven—this robbery of God for the sake of man, is a characteristic feature of our (according to our own estimate) enlightened times.

Blessed be God who hath put it into the hearts of the Reformers to prepare an Order of Prayer. Order in all things is both useful and pleasant: and strange indeed would it be that the Church should have no order in a matter so grave and important as public prayer. Order is as necessary to man as it is pleasing to God. The neglect of it leads to confusion, imperfection, and evil. There was order in the creation; every thing had its appointed time and place; there is order in the seasons, in days, and nights, and years; there is order in civil societies, and even among the angels and powers of God's kingdom; there was order in the services of the temple, and in His religious dispensations from the beginning to Christ; and

order will be to the end of time and for ever. The Church directs order in her worship, and has been taught to do so by the example of St. Paul, setting things in order himself, and instructing the churches of his day, "to let all things be done decently and in order." Who will not at once admit the necessity of order in all things? But we should not rest there; we should not only *praise* order but observe it. Let each one then be in his place, and attending to every one of his duties, according to the directions of the Church in the ORDER OF MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER, from first to last—leave out no link of the chain. Be in time,—follow the minister in order and in every appointed duty,—listen to the sentences and exhortation,—obey the order to kneel, or to rise up,—join in confession, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving,—let your lips and your hearts, your thoughts, your affections—let all within you and without you—harmonize with the order of the Church \*.

\* The following address has been recommended in the diocese of Down and Connor, to be inserted in the Books of Common Prayer :—

*"To every Member of this Congregation.*

"THE very defective practice of many persons, even of those who regularly attend divine worship, in neglecting to come before the commencement of the service, and to join in the service of the Church at the proper times, may lead to a supposition that they are not duly sensible of what is the chief object for which they assemble and meet together in holy places. This object is, together with the hearing of God's holy word, to unite in prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, after the custom of the Church of God in all ages. It is a privilege enjoyed by the members of the Church in this country, that they are able to join with their minister *in a language* which they can all understand, and *in a form of words* with which they may make themselves acquainted—being, at the same time, perfectly agreeable to Scripture, both in its meaning and expressions.

"In order to promote this object, so far as lies in your power, you are requested to observe the following rules :—

"I.—Take care to come to Church *before the service begins*; thus you will not, by coming late, interrupt the minister and con-

It is a custom which the common feeling of Christians has rendered sacred, not to enter or depart from the house of God, nor to assemble for the purpose of hearing his word, without first in a whispered prayer, entreating his good blessing that we may not pray or hear in vain. I will not ask how many there are with whom this custom has passed into an idle form, how many cover their faces and say nothing; but this I will say, that more and worthier honour

gregation, disturb the worship of God, or abridge your own spiritual benefit.

[**NOTE.**—Divine service commences in this Church at half-past Eleven o'clock in the morning; and at in the evening.]

“II.—Observe the *postures* directed in the Prayer Book: namely, kneeling during the Prayers, and standing during the Psalms, (whether read or sung,) the Creeds, and the Gospel.

“III.—Join audibly *with your voice* in those parts of the service which are appointed for ‘*the People*,’ namely, the general confessions, the Lord’s Prayer whenever used, the alternate verses of the Psalms and of the Hymns used after the Lessons, the Creeds, the Responses, and the “Amen,” at the end of every Prayer.

“IV.—Take part, if you are able, in singing; and, at all events, *stand up* when the congregation is called on to sing ‘To the praise and glory of God.’

“V.—Do *not leave* the Church, except in case of illness, until the congregation is dismissed by the blessing of the minister.

“An observance of these rules by you and every member of the congregation, would tend to promote the object of the Church in the appointment of a *Common Prayer*, and thus unite her members in ‘glorifying God with one mind and *one mouth*,’ through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

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“Sundays observe. Think when the bells do chime  
 ‘Tis angels music; therefore come not late.  
 When once thy foot enters the church, be bare;  
 God is more there than thou: for thou art there  
 Only by his permission. Then beware,  
 And make thyself all reverence and fear.  
 Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part;  
 Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasures thither;  
 Christ purged his Temple: so must thou thine heart,  
 All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together.”

GEORGE HERBERT, 1633.

would be paid to God's house, and more souls by far than now escape, would be snatched from sin and everlasting misery, if, when you thus give outward tokens of your reverence, you would beg the help of your Almighty Father, in some words like these:— “O God, without thee I am not able to please thee: but may thy Spirit this day both teach me the things that belong to my peace, and preserve them in my faith and recollection, so that the seed which thou sowest may prosper in my heart, till that day when thy blessed Son shall return to reap his harvest\*.” Other prayers, such as the following, have been also recommended for use privately, before the service of the Church, and also after it is ended.

*Before the Service.*

O Lord, I am now in thy house; assist, I pray thee, and accept my services; enable me, and all those that shall this day meet in thy name, to worship thee in spirit and in truth. Let thy Holy Spirit help our infirmities, and dispose our hearts to seriousness, attention, and devotion, and grant that we may improve this opportunity, to the honour of thy holy name, and the benefit of souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*After the Service.*

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, for this opportunity of attending thee in thy house and service. Pardon, I beseech thee, my wanderings and imperfections; mercifully accept my services, and grant that I and all Christians may be doers of thy word, and not hearers only, through our only Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen†.

\* Bishop HEBER's *Sermons*.

† These prayers are taken from a tract on the Catalogue of the Christian Knowledge Society, entitled “Directions for a devout and decent behaviour in the Publick Worship of God.”

The admirable collect for purity at the commencement of the order of the holy communion might be used with great propriety, privately, by every person at his entrance into church, as will more fully appear, if we consider the matter it contains, and the design of its being placed at the beginning of this solemn service. The heart of man in his fallen estate, is represented to us in Scripture as a corrupt and polluted fountain, which if left to itself, will send forth streams of all manner of impurity. Hence continually flow evil thoughts, vain imaginations, and wicked desires, which render us wholly unfit for the service and worship of Him, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. Now, since we are told, *that the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 1, we should most earnestly apply to Him for his sanctifying grace, to cleanse and purify our hearts, and qualify them for his service. For this purpose nothing could be better than the collect before us, which whoever uses with fervent piety, (joining his own sincere endeavours to keep his mind intent on the solemn business he is engaged in,) will find the happy effect of it, and perceive those vain and wicked thoughts that are apt to disturb his devotion gradually vanish, and his attention become fixed in its proper object.

When Christianity became the established religion of the Eastern and Western Empires, and churches were built for the celebration of divine service, they gave to them an oblong form, which was chosen, it is said, as resembling a *ship*, a common metaphor, by which the Church used to be represented, to remind us that we are tossed up and down in this world, and that out of the Church there is no safe passage to heaven, the country at which we all hope to arrive. It was always divided into two parts; the *nave* (probably from *navis*, a ship,) or body of the church; and

the *sacrarium*, since called the *chancel*, because it was divided from the body of the church by slight rails called *cancelli*. The nave was common to all the people, and was considered as representing the visible world: the chancel was peculiar to the priests and sacred persons. This end of the church was always to the East, in which they had a respect to Christ, who is styled *the Day-spring from on high*, Luke i. 7, 8; for as the East is the birth-place of the natural day, so Christ is the true Sun of Righteousness, who arose upon the world with the light of truth, when it sat in the darkness of error and ignorance. Since, therefore, we must turn our face to some quarter, it has been judged fittest that it should be towards the East, which for the above reasons, and from similar expressions in Scripture, has been deemed symbolically to be the peculiar residence of God. In the chancel always stood the altar or communion table, which none were allowed to approach but such as were in holy orders. The rubric "that the chancels shall remain as they have done in times past," is for the purpose of distinguishing them from the body of the church as heretofore: it was inserted to obviate a disposition which prevailed on the part of the puritans in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and afterwards during the late rebellion, to destroy the distinction of a chancel, which they thought tended too much to magnify the priesthood. There are "ornaments of the church, and of the ministers thereof," alluded to in the same rubric, by the former of which are meant the lights on the communion table, the pulpit-cloth, cushions; by the latter, surplices, hoods of academic degrees, chimeres, rochettes, &c., &c.\*

The surplice being the dress most commonly worn

\* Respecting these ecclesiastical vestures, see PALMER's *Orig. Liturg.*; Appendix.

by the officiating minister, it may be here judicious to remark, that there is high example and long practice for its use. The priests under the law wore a linen ephod, Exod. xxviii. 4, 5; 1 Sam. ii. 18. The Levites also that were singers, wore white linen, 2 Chron. v. 12. The Ancient of Days, Dan. vii. 9, is represented as having garments *white as snow*; when our Saviour was transfigured his raiment was *white as the light*; whenever angels have appeared to men they have always been clothed in white linen, Matt. xxviii. 3, and other places. The armies that followed the Lamb were clothed in white linen, and to the Lamb's wife was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, white and clean, for the fine linen is (that is, represents) the righteousness of the saints, Rev. xix. 14, 8. So much may be said for the significance of a dress, which might, however, be sufficiently defended, if regard be had only to its convenience, gravity, and decency; and why we should lose all these favourable considerations, because it is also worn by the priests of a corrupt church, it is not easy to perceive \*.

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## CHAPTER V.

### MORNING PRAYER,—TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THERE are many reasons for believing our morning service is not performed now exactly in the same manner as at the first, but that two services have been united; the morning prayer, strictly so called, being one, the litany and communion the other. Within the first century after the Reformation, the Church

\* See CARWITHEN'S *History of the Church of England*.

seems to have lapsed into the present practice, and to have combined both services into one \*.

THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WITH WHICH THE MORNING PRAYER BEGINS are admonitions to repentance, suited to the various descriptions of character to be found in a mixed congregation, and designed to prepare and dispose the mind for the duty of prayer, upon which we are about to enter. Considered as single sentences, they may be thus classed:—*To comfort* those who have an excessive fear of God's wrath, by the example of David and Jeremiah, Psalms li. 9; cxliii. 2; Jer. x. 24. *To strengthen the faith* of the doubtful and despairing, by showing how fit they are to ask pardon, and how likely God is to grant it on true repentance, Daniel ix. 9. *To instruct* those who are insensible of their guilt and danger, either because they think they have no sin, or that a slight repentance will procure pardon for it, 1 John i. 8, 9; Ezekiel xviii. 27. *To admonish* the negligent, who are deferring their repentance, Psalm li. 3; Matthew iii. 2. *To caution* the formal, who confess their sins with outward reverence without any sincere devotion, Joel ii. 13. Or they may be considered as a series of texts confirming, on the authority of God's word, and commanding to our hearts in impressive language, the several propositions of the exhortation which follows. The word *judgment* is used in scripture in a very extensive signification. In the sentence, “Correct me but with judgment,” it means, correct me favourably, moderately; in the sentence, “Enter not into judgment,” it implies the severity of judgment, a strict judicial process against the guilty, and the consequence of such a trial before an *infallible* judge, namely, condemnation and the execution of judgment.

THE EXHORTATION is a comment or paraphrase on

\* BLUNT's *History of the Reformation in England*.

the sentences, designed to apply and set them home, and to direct us how we ought to perform the following confession. It comprehends these several heads:—*A call to confession*: the Scripture moveth us to acknowledge and confess our sins. *A caution against concealing them*: that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the eyes of our heavenly Father. *The manner and qualification of confession*: an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart. “Humble and lowly,” that is, with sentiments of our own vileness by sin, and our unworthiness in the sight of God; “penitent,” that is, sorry for sins committed, with a hearty resolution not to commit them again; and “obedient,” that is, with a firm purpose to keep God’s commandments in future. *The end and design of confession*: that we may obtain forgiveness, not as the effect of confession as a meritorious cause, but by God’s infinite goodness and mercy. *The time and seasons of confession*: at all times, that is, in more frequent courses of private devotion, but especially in the solemn assembly of Christians in the Church. Lastly, the conclusion: beseeching us to accompany\* the minister with *a pure heart*, 1 Timothy ii. 8; *Psalm lxvi. 18*, and with *a humble voice*, Hebrews xii. 28.

The words “acknowledge” and “confess,” “dissemble” and “cloke,” “requisite” and “necessary,” are not mere repetitions of words of the same meaning,—the compilers of our liturgy were not men likely to use words without considering their sense,—and the beauty and nicety with which they have chosen them show both their critical skill, and the careful devotion with which these prayers were drawn up. To “acknowledge” our sins here means—to allow that certain

\* In this respect we possess a greater privilege than the Jews, for they were not allowed to enter the temple with the priest, but remained in the outer court.

*thoughts, words, and actions, are sins*, and is opposed to the phrase to “dissemble” our sins, which means, to deny certain actions to be sins, when they really are sins. Therefore, when we are exhorted to *acknowledge* and not to *dissemble* our sins, it refers to the *nature* and *character* of our *thoughts, words, and actions*, that we are to feel and admit our sinfulness, and not attempt to conceal that we are deserving of punishment. On the other hand, to *confess* our sins, relates not so much to the sinful *nature* of our acts, as to the *fact* of our having committed those acts, and is opposed to the term “*cloke*.” We are to *confess* and not to *cloke* our sins ; that is, we are to *declare* before God and the congregation that we are guilty of sinful acts, and must not try to cloke or hide them. The two former phrases relate to our inward consciousness, and that we should not deceive ourselves, or fancy we can deceive God, as to the sinfulness of our deeds, words, and thoughts ; the two latter relate to the outward act of confessing ourselves guilty before the congregation. We acknowledge the *nature*, we confess the *act* of sin. The use of the word “*acknowledge*” by *itself*, immediately afterwards, shows the nice sense which the compilers had of this distinction, “we ought at *all* times to *acknowledge* :” that is to say, when alone, as well as in public ; but we confess to another. *Things requisite*, mean things which we require for our comfort or pleasure, but without which we could exist. *Things necessary*, mean things without which we could not exist at all.

The *purposes* for which we assemble and meet together in public worship, are thus stated in the exhortation. *To render thanks* to God for his innumerable blessings bestowed on us : this we do in the thanksgivings, and several of the psalms. *To set forth his most worthy praise* : this we do in the psalms, hymns, anthems, and doxologies. *To hear his most holy word* :

it is read to us in the lessons, psalms, epistle, and gospel. *To ask those things which are requisite and necessary*, as well for the body as the soul ; that is, temporal and spiritual blessings : this we do in the collects, litany, and other forms of supplication \*. But unless true repentance go before, we are unworthy either to give thanks or to sing praise to God, Psalm xxxiii. 1 ; unfit to hear his most holy word, Matthew vii. 6 ; or to offer up any prayers to Him, John ix. 31. None of these services will be acceptable to God or profitable to us, unless we repent before we go about them.

The minister commences his address with the affectionate and apostolic salutation, “Dearly beloved brethren,” to express the tender good will and regard which the ministers of God’s word should have for the people committed to their charge, who should in return receive their admonitions meekly and thankfully, since they “speak to them the truth in love,” Ephesians iv. 15. Having been taught by scripture, and at our entrance into the Church at baptism, to regard ourselves as the members of one family, of which our Saviour is the head, and having been made fellow-heirs of the same hopes, and enjoined to “love as brethren,” we are thus reminded of our spiritual relationship, and of our joint participation in the blessings of the Gospel. In the sight of God all worldly distinctions are effaced ; with respect to the majesty and greatness of the Most High, every man is at such a distance from Him that all appear to be equally removed ; and with respect to his love and condescension, especially as displayed in redemption, every one is brought so nigh by the blood of Christ, that all who return to God are equally

\* This division of the leading duties of public worship accords remarkably with the account given by Austin of the practice of Christian assemblies ; and long before, Tertullian had expressed nearly the same thing.

welcomed as the objects of his favour. We have all one heavenly Father, in whom we live, and move, and have our being : and “ who hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth.” One Saviour has died for all ; and the same blood that washes away the sins of one is appointed also to blot out the iniquities of another. The same Holy Spirit that descends into the heart of one, and there sheds abroad the love of God with holy joy and peace, is ready, in the same manner to quicken and renew the hearts of others. And this communion of the Holy Ghost constitutes that union and brotherhood between the children of God, which is a bond far more close and more enduring than even that outward fellowship which exists in the Christian Church.

The rubric directs the GENERAL CONFESSION to be said, not by the minister only, but *by the whole congregation* after the minister, *all kneeling*: a posture which serves strongly both to express and to excite inward humility \*, and has been sanctioned as having been the practice of the Church militant, 1 Kings viii. 54; 2 Chronicles vi.; Psalm xcv. 6; Daniel vi. 10; Luke xxii.; Acts xix. 40, &c.; see also Isaiah xlv. 23; Ephesians iii. 14; and the habit also of the Church triumphant, Revelations vii. 11. Sometimes bodily infirmity may prevent persons kneeling, but this does not excuse the neglect of the practice when caused by negligence, ease, or indolence.

The minister should make such a pause between the end of the exhortation and the beginning of the confession, that the whole congregation may have sufficient time, deliberately, and without the least hurry, to put their bodies in a praying posture, to direct their minds to God, and fix them upon the divine majesty,

\* “ Making our bodies sensible witnesses of minds unfeignedly humbled.”—HOOKER.

so that they may be thoroughly composed for so solemn and heavenly an exercise, by the time the minister begins the confession. The people should remember that when they are repeating the several portions of the confession after the minister, they are speaking to God, declaring their repentance, and supplicating that reconciliation to his favour upon which their everlasting happiness depends. Let them, therefore, not behave themselves in a careless or slovenly manner; let them not utter the words in such a tone as proves that they do not mind what they say or to whom they speak. Let them so perform this duty that it may obtain the remission, and not add to the number, of their sins.

The general confession consists of two parts, besides the introduction, or address to God. 1st, The confession properly so called; wherein we acknowledge our erring and straying from God's ways (not tempted of God, or forced by invincible necessity, but) by following \* the devices and desires of our corrupt nature, by actual transgressions, and by sins of omission and commission; together with the forlorn and helpless condition to which they have reduced us. 2nd, Petitions for mercy and pardon for past offences, and grace to prevent them in future. In these no claim is advanced, but simply God's promise in Jesus Christ, the only plea which sinners can employ, and which, blessed be God! is a plea which shall not fail.

It is observable in the title and attributes of God in the different prayers, that the Church selects such as are most appropriate to the petitions that follow them, and most likely to produce corresponding affections in the minds of those who use them. The confession is in general terms; for if it had not

\* We blame ourselves *not* for *having*, but for *following* our corrupt inclinations.

been so, it would not have been appropriate for a congregational address ; it is, however, most comprehensive, leaving each to fill up the picture with his own details. The matter of it is true of, and appropriate to all ; the language is earnest, importunate, and reverential ; the object sought is our restoration to God's favour, and to holiness for Jesus Christ's sake.

The phrase "lost sheep" is exceedingly significant and proper ; a sheep is an animal, of all others, the most liable to stray, and least able to defend itself from its enemies ; or, when strayed, to return to the fold. It is, besides, scriptural. David says in the 100th psalm, "We are his people and the sheep of his pasture ;" and God is called "a Shepherd," Psalm xxiii. 1. Our Saviour speaks of his disciples as his sheep, particularly in John x. 1, 5 ; and therefore, when God's servants forsake the path of his commandments, they are said to go astray like sheep. Thus David says, Psalm cxix. 176, "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost ;" and Isaiah, liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Our Saviour compares sinners to lost sheep. The beauty of the metaphor will appear more plainly by the knowledge that in eastern countries the shepherd walks *before* the sheep, and leads them to pure waters and verdant pastures ; a striking and beautiful illustration of God's preventing grace and continual help.

Other terms which occur in the confession are likewise very suitable ; for example, "erred and strayed." To *err* relates to mistake, ignorance, infirmity, and the involuntary incursion of sudden thoughts ; to *stray* relates to more gross violations of God's laws, more wilful forsaking his ways, and wandering into the paths of sin. "Devices and desires." *Devices* means our own wisdom and schemes : *desires* means the wishes and temptations of our corrupt nature. "No

health in us." *Health* is here used in a spiritual sense, as it is frequently so in Scripture, and the phrase implies not only that our nature is corrupt, our souls diseased by sin, but also, that we have no power of our own, either to cure our present spiritual diseases, or to resist the attacks of future ones. "Restore thou them," &c. In Scripture, the word here and oftentimes translated *restore*, is occasionally applied to the repairing and rebuilding of a ruinous and depopulated city; too true an emblem of the deplorable state of the soul laid waste by sin; its beauty defaced, its strength dismantled, and its fair inhabitants, innocence and virtue, turned out of their sacred mansions. See Daniel's prediction of the Messiah, couched under the figurative language of restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem. Dan. ix. 25. "A godly, righteous, and sober life." St. Paul sums up in this comprehensive expression the whole of practical Christianity. *Godly*, exercising piety and devotion in our exercises to *God*; *righteously*, in all honesty and equity, fidelity and charity, to our *neighbours*; *soberly*, governing *ourselves* in soul and body, with temperance, moderation, humility, and modesty.

Every person should take care to be in the church before the commencement of the service. An habitual practice of being late is highly reprehensible; generally, because such backwardness is *injurious to the honour of God*, inasmuch as it shows want of reverence for him, and zeal in his service; more particularly, because by occasioning the parties to be absent from one or more portions which occur at the commencement of the service, such as the lowly acknowledgment of sin in the general confession, the authoritative declaration of God's forgiveness in the absolution, and the ascription of glory in the Lord's prayer, in the only place where the doxology is introduced, it diminishes that honour which severally arises to Him by the due per-

formance of each of these portions in turn. I need not add the disturbance and confusion occasioned by the succession of new comers, and the interruption of that decency and good order, of that gravity and solemnity, which the reason of the thing, as well as holy Scripture, teaches us ought to prevail in all cases which concern religion, and the performance of our duties to the Almighty.

*It is injurious to our brethren*; by exciting the curiosity of the young and careless, by distracting the attention of those who have not a full command of their thoughts, and by occasionally disturbing, not the minds only, but the persons of even the most serious and devout. The example is also in a greater or less degree injurious to our brethren, encouraging them to be backward and careless with respect to the offices of religion.

*It is injurious to ourselves*; for we lose the opportunity of previous prayer to God for his preventing and assisting grace, and of solemn meditation upon the great work of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, which draws us together,—an advantage which would afford that calmness and composure of mind before the commencement of our public devotions, which is requisite in order either to prepare ourselves for performing them properly, or to present them as a reasonable service, holy, acceptable unto God. It prevents us from sharing in some of the prescribed service of the church: a body of devotional exercise of which no part or member can without injury be lost; without injury especially to those who deprive themselves of the benefit designed by it. Besides, *if injurious to God's honour, it must be injurious to ourselves*. For it is the declaration of God himself, a declaration which was dreadfully verified in the case of him to whom it was uttered, and which will doubtless be at some time

verified in the case of all those to whom it shall be applicable, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Lastly, if the practice be injurious to our brethren, in that respect it also is injurious to ourselves. We are assured, that "they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3; on the contrary, if we obstruct the progress of others in the paths of righteousness, or if we encourage the carelessness of those who are indifferent about entering or proceeding on them, "sin lieth at the door." St. Paul cautions the Corinthians to "take heed lest by any means their liberty become a stumbling-block to them that are weak," 1 Cor. viii. 9. And even in a case of comparative indifference, he laid it down for his rule of conduct, to abstain from that which might make "his brother to offend," 1 Cor. viii. 13. How much more should this be our rule of conduct in a case, not of indifference, but of religious obligation, even as it relates to ourselves alone! And how much more need have we in such a case to regard the apostle's admonition, and beware "lest when we sin so against the brethren, we sin against Christ\*."

The view of confession held by the Romish church differs considerably from that of the Church of England; for the CHURCH OF ENGLAND ordains general and public confession to God, and recommends in particular cases private and special confession to the minister; this is voluntary, (as it was in the ancient Church,) and leads to no possible abuse; its design is

\* To a question proposed to a late pious and very amiable person, "Why are you so particular in coming to church always before the commencement of the service?" the answer is said to have been returned to this effect: "For this, among other reasons, because it is part of my religion not to disturb the devotions of others."

that godly counsel and consolation may be administered, that scruples may be removed, and if required, that the mind of the penitent may be sustained by the pronouncing absolution by the authority committed to the minister of Christ's Church. *The Romish Church makes private confession of every sin to the priest obligatory before receiving a sacrament, and holds that it is necessary to salvation.* This is calculated to enslave the mind and establish a spiritual tyranny. According to this doctrine, every member of that Church, especially females, must undergo a searching and indecent scrutiny on the most delicate points and revolting crimes; a course calculated to pollute the minds both of the confessor and the confessed. The secrets of families must be placed at the disposal of the priest; and questions put which a modest woman should shrink from contemplating; and it is held, that those who decline this cannot be saved. *The Church of England rejects such a doctrine, and denies that the Scripture warrants it.*

Sin is compared to a bond, Acts viii. 23, Prov. v. 22; because it binds down the soul by its guilt and power, and not only hinders it from free converse with God, but makes it liable to eternal condemnation. Jesus came to unloose those bonds, Isa. lxvi. 1, and actually did so to divers when he was on earth. This unloosing men from the bond of their sin is that which we call ABSOLUTION, and it is a necessary and comfortable part of the priest's office. It consists not merely in the reversal of the sentence and removal of the curse due to sin, but also in the influence of the Holy Spirit consequent on true repentance, and productive, not of mere temporary and outward amendment, but of that inward abiding purity and holiness for the rest of our life, "which at the last will bring us to God's eternal joy."

We gather from various passages of Scripture that God hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare forgiveness of sins. He has endued his ambassadors with the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18, a part of which ministry, the power of remitting sins, is as necessary now as it was then, and therefore to continue as long as the ministry of reconciliation lasted, that is to the end of the world, Eph. iv. 12, 13. Whom therefore the minister absolves, God absolves, *if they be truly penitent*. Christ invested his apostles with a certain authority which they were to exercise after he ascended up to the Father, part of which authority was power to pronounce remission of sins to the penitent, and deny it to the impenitent. And, moreover, he gave them the authority which he himself also possessed, of sending other labourers invested with the same authority which they themselves had received, and promises to be with his ministers even unto the end of the world.

The absolution in our morning service, it should be carefully observed, *is not a prayer*; it is a message *to us* *from* God—a declaration and assurance of God's forgiveness on certain conditions to be performed by us. It is to be authoritatively uttered by the *priest alone*, as God's commissioned officer, *standing*: a posture suitable to the character he bears, and the authority with which he speaks, while the people continue kneeling, to express their reverence and humility for God, whose pardon they are to receive by the lips of his ambassador.

It has been said to be a popish form, but neither it, nor the confession which precedes it, is taken out of any popish service; on the contrary, both of them appeared for the first time in the second edition of King Edward the Sixth's Common Prayer Book, which

was made with the advice of Presbyterian Protestants. The absolution is from Pollanus, Calvin's successor at Strasburg, and *was directly levelled against popery*; for the popish absolutions were given in private, separately to each particular person, positively, and without reversion, in the *name of the priest*: this is given in public, to all persons at once, conditionally, and in the *name of God*. It is prefaced by the following declarations:—that God is almighty, and therefore able to forgive; that he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot desire the death of those sinners whom he sent Jesus to pardon and save; that he has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare remission of sins. It consists of two distinct parts:—1st, A general declaration of the mercy of God to returning sinners, and an assurance of his pardon to us on condition of our hearty repentance and unfeigned faith. 2nd, An admonition to us, to implore the aid of his Holy Spirit, in order to enable us to perform those conditions, and thereby render this pardon effectual to our eternal salvation.

The rubric before the absolution directs it to be said by the priest alone, in contradistinction, not to the people merely, but likewise to the inferior order of the clergy, the deacons. The absolution is to be pronounced by virtue of the commission mentioned, John xx. 23, upon which account the Church hath not allowed this form to be pronounced by a deacon, to whom that commission is not given; but hath reserved it to the priests, who at their ordination are vested with that authority. Though therefore the word "ministers" be put, both in the foregoing rubric before the confession, and in that following before the Lord's prayer, yet in this before the absolution, though coming just between them, the word "priest" is inserted, which was done at the last review of the liturgy in 1661,

to distinguish and limit the power to the priest's office.

From the omission of any regulation as to the course to be pursued by an officiating deacon when he comes to the absolution, it may be inferred that the Church intended him to pass from the general confession to the Lord's prayer, unless a priest were present, which perhaps generally was the case when the rubric was constructed. If, instead of the absolution, any prayer be admissible, the preference ought to be given to the "prayer which may be said after any of the former." There is something like authority for the use of it, and being a sort of precatory absolution, it forms as good a substitute as circumstances permit for the authoritative absolution of the priest.

It may here not be irrelevant to state the erroneous opinions held respecting absolution by Romanists on the one hand, and sectarians on the other, as opposed to the scriptural views of the Church of England. *THE ROMISH CHURCH impiously pretends to invest men with the judicial power of absolution; THE OPPOSING SECTARIAN altogether denies that it is given to one man more than another to declare and convey God's forgiveness to the penitent.* *THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, clearing away the rubbish of popery, and keeping close to the word of God, maintains that Jesus Christ did truly invest an order of men with authority to remit sins to the penitent, (some of which remains with the successors in the ministry, not indeed the discretionary power, as they cannot discern the spirits and hearts as the apostles could,) while she maintains that this is her act only as the instrument, and God as the efficient cause—that her sentence is valid only on the fulfilment of previous conditions of faith and repentance in the subjects of it, but that on those pre-requisites being truly found in them, then her voice has the authority of Christ.*

Though we had previously been professing to exercise repentance, and have been assured of God's forgiveness upon it, of which the gift of His Spirit is a consequence, yet in the latter part of this absolution we are again directed to pray for it, it being not only a necessary disposition to pardon, so that neither God will nor man can absolve the impenitent, but also in some of its parts a necessary consequent of pardon. The remembrance of sin must always, though we have been pardoned, be grievous to us; which is one part of repentance. And amendment of life, and the bringing forth of fruits worthy of repentance, which is another part, is not only necessary after pardon, but is the more necessary because of pardon, by reason of the mercy and love there shown to us, and the new obligation thus laid upon us to live well. The pardoned, therefore, had need to pray for repentance, and the grace of God's holy spirit, the continuance of which with us depends on the continuance of our supplications for his presence, which supplications will also procure us greater degrees of it, that so both our present service and our future life may be pleasing to God.

AMEN is a Hebrew word which means verily, truly, and has been retained in all languages to express the assent of the person that pronounces it to that which he returns it as an answer. In our liturgy, as also in Scripture, it bears different significations, according to the different forms to which it is annexed. At the end of the prayers and collects it is addressed to God, and is expressive of desire, signifying "verily, so be it, as in our prayers we have expressed." At the end of exhortations, absolutions, creeds, it is addressed to the priest, and is affirmative, signifying "verily," "that is true, this is our sense and meaning."

The "amen" is sometimes printed in one cha-

racter, sometimes in another, the reason of which is to prevent any irregularity of the priest and the people mistaking or mutually invading each other's part. In the confession and Lord's prayer, as also in the creeds and doxology, whereof the "amen" is a part, and to be said therefore both by priest and people, it is printed in the same letter with the form; but in the collects, whereto it is subjoined only as an answer, to be made only by the people, it is printed in a different character; the people may observe from their being directed to say Amen at the end of the prayers, that they are to be silent in the prayers themselves, and go along with the minister in their minds. For the minister is the appointed intercessor for the people, and consequently it is his office to offer up their prayers and praises in their behalf, insomuch that the people have nothing more to do than to attend to what he says, and to declare their assent by an Amen at last, without disturbing those that are near them by muttering over the collects in a confused manner, as was practised in some congregations, contrary to common sense and decency.

We are not without examples in Scripture of the *people joining* in the worship of God. Moses and the children of Israel united their voices in singing praises to God, as recorded in Exodus xv. The apostles and their disciples united their voices in adoration and prayer, as related in Acts iv. The blessed in heaven are represented as uniting their voices in prayer to God, Revelations vi., and also in praises, Revelations v.; there are also instances of the people *responding* to the minister. The Israelites were commanded to do so, Psalm cvi., where, after the conclusion of the prayers and praises of which the Psalm consists, the injunction follows, "Let all the people say, Amen, praise ye the Lord;" and accordingly we find in

1 Chronicles xvi., "All the people said Amen, and praised the Lord." At the dedication of Solomon's temple, 2 Chronicles vi. and vii., an account is given of the part taken by the people. After the Babylonish captivity, when Ezra opened the book of the law and blessed the Lord, all the people answered Amen, Amen, and worshipped. The language of St. Paul shows that this practice was not abolished by the Gospel, when, in 1 Cor. xiv., he assumes, as a general and well known fact, that the "unlearned," or the people at large, bore their part in the worship of the first Christian assemblies. In Isaiah vi. 1, the seraphim are represented as celebrating the glory of God in alternate strains; and throughout the book of Revelations, which repeatedly describes the adorations of the Church triumphant in heaven, the multitude and elders are represented as calling upon each other in successive Alleluias; alluding, as there is good reason to believe, to the manner in which the Church militant was then in the habit of praising God upon earth, and agreeing with the precept of St. Paul, Col. iii., "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs."

The members of the Church should *join vocally as well as mentally* in divine service, for many good reasons:—1st, Because the Church has so appointed, according to the power she possesses of ordaining things which are in accordance with God's word, which it has been shown this practice is. 2nd, Because the service is a reasonable service, whether considered generally, or particularly with reference to God and ourselves; generally, because the practice tends to *fix and quicken attention*, by keeping the understanding vigilant and constant; to *animate devotion*\*,

\* "The whole beauty and effect of this interesting interchange of solemn worship is lost by the inattentive habits of many, who

by mutually encouraging the minister and people to proceed with vigour in the discharge of their respective parts ; and to give to public prayer its proper character of *an united, a common address* to the Almighty ; or particularly, from the evident propriety of so doing in the several provisions of the service ; for instance, the *general confession, the Lord's prayer, the creeds and litany*. It may be said that this is permitting women to speak in the Church, which is forbidden by the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. But the prohibition refers to their giving instruction or entering into questions or disputations there, and not to their joining in the service.

It is too generally supposed by the people, that it is unnecessary for them to repeat the responses, seeing that the parish-clerk is appointed for that purpose ; and custom has, indeed, introduced such an officer in our churches, obliging him to a constant attendance on the public services ; but to this intent, that the worship might not suffer by a general failure, either in the absence, or answers of the people, *not that such person should supply or excuse either* ; custom has also authorized him to exercise such office before, yet jointly with the congregation, in a distinguished manner, he with a more audible, they with a more

appear to think it beneath their care to join in the service of God, much less to respond audibly ; such persons assume the character of indifferent spectators, who have no individual interest in the proceedings of the place ; their hearts are elsewhere, their treasure is on earth, and therefore they abstract themselves from God's service in spirit, though they be present in body. The words of the lips do not indeed prove a corresponding interest of the heart, but the silence of the lips, on such solemn occasions, strongly indicates a careless spirit, and wandering heart. We can scarcely form a conception how inspiring a mode of worship ours would be, if the hearts and tongues of all united in prayer and praise. A whole multitude of believers, assembled to confess their sins, to implore pardon, and to celebrate redeeming love with one heart and one voice, would be the most sublime contemplation that the human mind could grasp on this side of eternity."—CLOSE's *Sermons*.

humble voice, but to this two-fold intent:—1st, that a general deficiency, by a total silence, might be prevented in the public answers; 2nd, that by the clerk's audible pronunciation of Amen and responses, the close and completion of the prayers and other parts might appear; and their separation from, and succession to, each other might be heard and distinguished. That the silence of the congregation is supplied by the clerk, is so gross an error, so directly contrary to the intention of our Church that, as if it were to put down such a conceit, no such officer is ever taken notice of in any of her directions concerning the manner of celebrating public worship. The rubric, indeed, after the apostle's creed, directs, that “then the minister, *clerks*, and people shall say the Lord's prayer with a loud voice;” but the clerks there intended were clerks *in holy orders*, who might be present at the service, and who were to join with the officiating minister in this part of the service; but still, to join in such a manner, as not to supercede the people, who are also expressly appointed to join with them in the same service. The substitution of the parish-clerk is not calculated to answer those good purposes which (as has been already observed,) result from the congregation joining vocally in the service. It is calculated neither to fix and quicken the attention of the people, nor to animate their devotion; nor to give to public worship that character by which it should be distinguished, as an united address to God from all the members of the congregation. Whilst the clerk is performing the people's duty, the people themselves are left at liberty to be as inattentive and as indevout as they please; at the same time, how utterly at variance the sort of dialogue which sometimes passes between the minister and the parish-clerk, is with every idea of congregational worship, with every idea of the united

devotions of a great assembly, lifting up their voice with one accord in honour of the Almighty, must be obvious to the perception of the most casual observer.

Nor, again, is the substitution of such an individual at all calculated to meet those *special considerations* which give peculiar propriety to the union of the congregation in the several parts of divine worship. That he should concur with the rest of the congregation in making confession of his own sins, in testifying his own obedience to his Saviour, in putting up his own praises of God, in making profession of his own belief, and in giving his own assent and confirmation to the prayers of the minister, uttered on behalf of the whole congregation, is a duty which belongs to him in common with every other member of the congregation. He has no authority whatsoever, he is not invested with an office or character which confers upon him authority, to be the instrument of presenting the wants and desires of others to the throne of the heavenly grace; or to confess sin, to petition for mercy, to utter praises, to declare belief, and to give assent to prayer, in any other name than his own.

Formal regularity, however, in repeating the responses, will not prove us either true penitents or truly pardoned; our hearts and lives must be in a growing state of conformity to the will of God, before we can draw any just and favourable conclusions respecting our own safety. For the Lord hath clearly revealed it, and our Church invariably speaks the same language, that none will be admitted at the last to his eternal joy, but such as have confessed and forsaken their sins, and fled for refuge and pardon to the love of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and the more lively sense we have of the riches of his grace, the more holy shall we be in all manner of conversation.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MORNING PRAYER,—CONTINUED.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER TO THE TE DEUM.

OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, which is next in order after the absolution, it has been justly observed, that the whole composure is truly wouderful, being so short, that the meanest may learn it; so plain, that the most ignorant may understand it; and yet so full, that it comprehends all our wants, and intimates all our duty; showing not only what is fit to be asked, but what manner of persons we ought to be, whence Tertullian calls it the “epitome of the Gospel,” as containing our persuasion of God's love, our desire of his honour, our subjection to his authority, our submission to his will, and our dependence on his providence; our need of his mercy to pardon former offences, and of his grace to keep us from future sin, and of both, to deliver us from the punishment due to them all; concluding with acts of praise and adoration: and being drawn up by our great Advocate, who knew his Father's treasures, as well as our wants, it is certainly the most complete in itself, the most acceptable to God, and the most useful to us of any form in the world; for which cause it ought to be united to all our offices, to make up their defects, and recommend them to our heavenly Father, who cannot deny us when we speak the very same words which his dear Son hath put into our mouths, if we use them with understanding and devotion. The Church hath justly always shown that deference to the Lord's prayer, that she hath inserted it in every distinct office of her liturgy, to this end,

that by its perfection we might supply the defects and atone for the infirmities of her own compositions. It is ordered to be said by the minister with an *audible* voice, because it was customary in the ancient Church for it to be said in such a manner ; but chiefly so as a corrective of the practice of the Church of Rome, by which it was appointed to be said secretly or mentally. Another reason is, that all the congregation might know it the better, and join with the minister in that most excellent part of divine worship. It consists of three parts :—1st, a preface, expressing the goodness and greatness of Him to whom we pray ;—2nd, seven petitions, by many accounted but six, the two last being reckoned as one, because they nearly relate to one another ; of these, the first three concern God's glory,—namely, the honour of his name and the advancement of his authority, and the fulfilling of his will ; and the four last concern our own good, being offered for temporal supplies, for remission of sins past, for prevention of future sins, and for deliverance from evils and miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal ;—3rd, a doxology, ascribing to God dominion and might, mercy and praise\*.

There is much propriety of prefixing the confession and absolution to the Lord's prayer ; for, till we had confessed and repented of our sins, we could not, in the endearing sense, call God our Father ; and before we had his promise of absolution and pardon, we could not call Him so with comfort. And since, in the case of this, as of all other prayers, we cannot expect God to listen to it unless our life be in agreement with the matter of our petitions, every particular sentence

\* Commensurate with the excellence of this prayer has been the number of paraphrases and comments upon it. I can here allude only to those of Brockwell, Crossman, Mann, Mant, Ogden, Pinder, Wilson, &c.

and petition of this prayer carries with it a corresponding duty. When we address Almighty God as "Our Father," we are reminded to show Him that honour which is his due, and to treat all men as our brethren with kindness and brotherly love; and when we address Him as peculiarly being in heaven, we are reminded of his infinite greatness, and of our own lowliness in comparison of Him, "whose seat is in heaven, and whose kingdom ruleth over all," Ps. xi. 14; ciii. 19. The first petition, wherein we pray that his name may be "hallowed," teaches us not to bring any dishonour on it by our conduct, nor to treat it profanely or lightly, but to cause it to be glorified by the sincerity of our worship, and the goodness of our behaviour. By the second petition, which prays that "God's kingdom may come," we are taught to live ourselves, and to encourage others in living, a holy life, that we may be worthy subjects of his kingdom on earth, and may continually be more fit, through our Saviour's merits, to enter into his heavenly kingdom. From the petition, that God's "will may be done," we should learn to be diligent in doing his will, both by performing what He commands, and by abstaining from what He forbids; and, as far as we may may be able, by causing his will to be done by others. As we pray God to "give us our daily bread," it should be our constant practice to use those means which He hath appointed for procuring it, industriously and contentedly; and we should upon no account accept it from the devil, which we do if we employ any dishonest means for bettering our condition. From the petition that God will "forgive us our trespasses," results the duty of repenting of them and forsaking them, together with that of "forgiving those who trespass against us." By the petition that God will not

"lead us into temptation," but will "deliver us from evil," we are taught to struggle against every temptation that we may meet with ; to resist the first motion or inclination to commit sin ; and, above all, not to live in the practice of anything which we know to be evil. *Lastly*, by the doxology in the conclusion of the prayer, we are taught to entertain a due reverence for that perfect Being, to whom belong "the kingdom, and the power, and the glory," who "heareth not sinners," John xi. 31 ; but who heareth those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth," John iv. 23, namely, those who worship Him with their hearts, and with the offering of a holy life.

When this prayer occurs in the second lesson,—whether the congregation kneel, or should repeat it after the minister, has been matter of doubt,—standing seems in this case a more suitable posture. The congregation should not repeat it after the minister, for it is their duty to "hear God's holy word," and no part of the lessons is appointed to be repeated by them.

There is commonly an introductory sentence to the Lord's prayer in our liturgy, for we know, from humiliating experience, that we are apt to become careless about what is familiar to us; and hence we are tempted to offer up this prayer with less earnestness and application than any prayer which we use. Indeed, when we consider the force and extent of each petition; what sublime and important matter is contained in the varied portions; what a height of adoration is expressed; what a depth of penitence; what a fulness of desire against temptation and sin: we cannot but feel that to utter this prayer with fervency, requires much recollection and thoughtfulness. Hence we may perceive the benefit of some short sentence preceding our repetition of it as a preparation of heart,—

"Lord, teach us to pray." Let this be our feeling and supplication, that this perfect form may become more blessed in our eyes, and purifying to our souls.

It has been justly observed, that the most delightful part of God's service is praise. It is a higher and nobler employment than prayer, inasmuch as satisfaction is above desire. In prayer we bring our empty vessels; in praise we carry them home rejoicing, full of the waters of salvation. Prayer will have an end, at least as to its present form, when faith shall be swallowed up in vision, and even hope have nothing left to long for; but praise shall endure throughout eternity, whose countless ages, as they roll interminably on, shall bear its ever-flowing tide to the remotest bounds of creation: when occupied in praise, we approach the nearest to our brethren round the throne; they praise the Lamb that was slain; and we can utter the same new song, though in feebler strains, even in this "house of our pilgrimage." For we are not called to gloomy sorrow, but to joy. It is the Christian's privilege to "rejoice evermore," and in everything to "give thanks." It is true that in the world we may meet with tribulation, but in Christ we have a joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not, and therefore it well becomes those that "fear the Lord, to speak often one to another" of his loving-kindness, and to be telling of "his salvation from day to day." \* \* \* \* \*

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we shold at all times and in all places giye thanks unto the Lord," but there is an especial propriety in praise, when those whom the same Lord has crowned with the same mercies meet in harmonious gratitude to stir up each other to renewed and warmer exultation, and to make the full choir of united hallelujahs swell upwards from earth to heaven, and come before

the throne of God as many clouds of incense, a pleasant and accepted sacrifice through Jesus Christ; and therefore it has ever been the practice of the Church to assemble her sons to the exercise of thanksgiving. "I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people\*."

It should be borne in mind that the VERSICLES AND RESPONSES after the Lord's prayer and elsewhere, require to be connected with each other in order to render the sense perfect; and therefore, that the people should join *mentally* in those which the minister repeats; and the minister in like manner should join in the responses which the people return. Both parties should take care that they do not confuse and disturb each other by beginning their several portions too soon. The minister's first versicle should be finished before the people utter a word of response, and the people should have time to finish their response before the minister commences the second versicle, &c., so that both minister and people may have time enough deliberately to offer every portion, and make all of them together one continued act of devotion. The same rule must be observed in all those psalms and hymns which are used alternately.

The responses here prescribed consist of prayers and praises. The two first are prayers taken from that great storehouse of devotion, the Psalms of David. The first is from that penitential psalm, the 51st, when he had looked upon his guilt so long, that shame, and grief, and fear of punishment had almost sealed his life and made him speechless. This sentence occurs frequently in ancient liturgies, particularly in those of St. James and St. Chrysostom. The second is from the 70th, as also from the 40th Psalm; this also is of ancient use in the Greek Church, and is the

\* GRINFELD, *On the Te Deum.*

paraphrase of that remarkable supplication "Hosannah," which signifies "Save now Lord, we beseech thee," Psalm cxviii. 25.

The other two versicles and responses are acts of praise. In this we imitate David, who commonly, when he had made his confession, declared his distress, and begged pardon, turned his petition into praises, because of his lively hope of acceptance. So we being full of hopes that our gracious Father will forgive us, rise up with joy to sing the excellent hymn of the dying martyr Polycarp, (to whom, as the Angel or Bishop of Smyrna, St. John is said to have addressed his Revelation,) being a paraphrase on the song of the seraphim, Isai. vi. 3. In the fourth century, the Arians attempted, but without success, to alter the conjunctions into prepositions, thus, "Glory be to the Father, *through* the Son, *in* the Holy Ghost." Inserted here it serves both as a hymn of praise, and as a confession of our right belief in the Holy Trinity in Unity.

The second "Praise ye the Lord," is the English translation of the Hebrew word, "Hallelujah," (appropriately placed here to indicate that we are passing from the penitential to the eucharistic part of the service,) to which the people answer "And our mouth shall show forth thy praise," hereby understanding that they will *not merely hear* the psalms and hymns read to them as matter of instruction only, but that they will bear a part in them with the minister.

The sentences, exhortation, absolution, and other parts of the liturgy which are spoken to the people only, ought to be uttered in quite a different manner, and tone of voice from what becomes the confession, the Lord's prayer, and those other portions of the service which are directed and spoken *to God*.

The praises, and especially the Psalms, should be repeated standing; kneeling is not a proper posture

for such parts as are not directed to God, and *sitting* is an irreverent posture for such as are directed to Him, as all sober Christians must confess; but standing does tolerably well suit both parts, though it is not the very best for one of them; and therefore, since both these parts,—namely, those which are, and those which are not, directed to God,—are so commonly and so suddenly altered, mingled, and interwoven, the one with the other, that the most suitable postures for each of them cannot be always used, certainly that one posture which best suits both of them together should be preferred.

The Church directs that the Psalms shall be either “said” (as in the parochial service) “or sung” (as in the choir service), and there are examples in Scripture of both these ways of praising God. His praises were celebrated in the Jewish Church by singing, 2 Chron. xxix. 30; and afterwards in the Christian Church, as appears from the language of St. Paul, Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; and not to insist on those places which seem to require us to “say psalms,” (such as Psalm cxviii. 2, Bible translation,) we find in Scripture several sacred hymns, particularly of Hannah, the blessed Virgin, Zacharias, Simeon, and the saints in heaven, Rev. vii. 12, xi. 17, which are related to have been said by them respectively; and the circumstances in the story do not make it probable that they were sung.

THE INVITATORY PSALM WHICH FOLLOWS THE RESPONSES is the 95th; it is preferred above many of the same general tenor, probably on account of the grave monitory warnings at the end of it, which, by the case of the Jews in the wilderness, describe forcibly the position and peculiar danger of a *chosen* people. It contains a threefold exhortation: 1st, to praise God; 2nd, to pray to Him; and 3rd, to hear His word;

together with the manner in which these several acts are to be performed,—and its being placed here therefore is an additional proof of the pious and prudent care of our Church in the selection of her devotional offices.

It may be well to explain the following phrases in it :—(God the strength of our salvation.) By his power alone we can be preserved from present and future evils. (A great King above all gods.) Above all that have ever had that name ascribed to them ; the false deities of the heathen ; Satan, “the god of this world,” 2 Cor. iv. 4. (In his hands are all the corners of the earth.) His presence and influence extend to the remotest and most inaccessible places, and there is none where He cannot deliver or punish. (People of his pasture, &c.) He feeds our souls by his word and his grace, as well as our bodies with daily bread, and guides us mercifully through this world to a better. (Harden not your hearts, as when your fathers tempted me, &c.) If ever we design to become his servants in earnest, we should hearken immediately to his continual calls ; else through a habit of disobedience, our minds become callous and “past feeling,” Eph. iv. 19 ; and, like those who have gone before us in the profession of religion, doubt and put to unreasonable trials God’s omnipotence, goodness, and truth ; and, as the unbelieving Jews were excluded from the land of Canaan, we be excluded from what that prefigured, the eternal “rest which remaineth for the people of God” in heaven.

The Latin sentences prefixed to each psalm or hymn, are the first words of the several psalms in that language, and were retained as names or titles when the service was changed into the vernacular tongue, which the people could understand. There are also dots resembling a colon, which usually occur about the

middle of each verse of a psalm; these denote merely a rest in the music, when the service is chanted, and are to be altogether disregarded in the reading\*.

THE PSALMS are appointed by our Church to be read more frequently than any other book in the Bible, because the choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain, and also more movingly express. This book above the rest doth set forth and celebrate all the considerations and operations which belong to God: it magnifieth the holy meditations and actions of divine men: it is of things heavenly, an universal declaration. What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction; a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as have entered before; a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come,—all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of any man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found. Hereof it is that we covet to make the Psalms especially familiar to all. This is the very cause why we iterate the Psalms oftener than any other part of Scripture besides; the cause whereof we inure the people, together with the minister, and not the minister alone, to read them, as other parts of Scripture he doth.

\* HOWLETT'S *Directions for reading the Liturgy.*

... In the reading of the Psalms, it should be observed carefully, 'in whose person the several sentences are spoken.' In some Psalms or portions of psalms, it is God or Christ; in others, it is wicked men that speak. These we must repeat as their sayings, and none as our own but what were intended for us. Even the words of the Psalmist, if we were to adopt them, may frequently seem inapplicable to the outward condition or inward frame of many in the congregation. But most of them all good people may say, even of themselves singly, with much truth; for they have constantly enemies, temporal or spiritual, afflictions more or less heavy, valuable mercies, and at times warm feelings of pious dispositions, which, if not present, may be so recalled and made their own again, as to be very sincerely expressed to God. And what they cannot say in their own name separately, they may truly say in the name of Christ's Church of which they are members; and they ought and surely do bear some share of the mercies and sufferings, the fears and desires, of every part of it, in every state; and as David, in some of the Psalms, takes on him the person of Christ, in others he seems to take that of his disciples, and to speak not in any one particular character, but as representing the whole body of believers,—or if there be any passages which neither of these methods will suit, still we may rehearse them as expressing the case of some eminent worthy of old times, and be affected by it accordingly; for we are often strongly affected by the circumstances well described, not only of distant, but of imaginary persons. We may consider, as we go on, the likeness or the difference between his situation, his temper, and our own; and raise from it many reflections of sympathy and caution, of humiliation, encouragement, and thankfulness. Thus, at least, we may bring everything we say home to our-

selves, and by so doing, furnish our minds with a most valuable store of devout thoughts and language, perhaps for many future occasions of our own and others.

Objections have been made to the Psalms, one of which is, that in several of them David utters most bitter imprecations against his enemies. These, however, are not spoken of private and personal enemies; but of the opposers of God and his Anointed, nor any among these but the irreclaimable and finally impenitent; and this by way of *prediction* rather than *imprecation*, which would appear, if the original verbs were translated uniformly in the present tense, as they might be, and indeed should be translated. The words when rendered in this form contain a prophecy of the infatuation, rejection, and destruction of such as should obstinately persevere in their opposition to the councils of heaven, whether relative to David, or to Christ, or the Church. Or we may use them as expressions of abhorrence against sin, the evil of our own hearts, and the malice of our spiritual adversary.

It has been objected, in the second place, that the Psalms are unfit for our use, because they are full of Jewish notions and phrases. To this it may be replied, that they were composed by the aid of the Holy Spirit with a view to Christian times: our Saviour appeals particularly to those things which are written in the Psalms concerning him, Luke xxix. 44. Nor is the difficulty great in applying the peculiarities of one dispensation to what answers them in the other; of understanding by the law, the doctrine of Him who came to fulfil it; by Jerusalem and Zion, the Christian Church; by the several sacrifices, that of our blessed Lord, or of our own prayers and praises offered up in his name; by the altar, the holy table; by temporal enemies and deliverances, spiritual ones;

and so of the rest, thanking God at the same time that we have light afforded us to see so much deeper into this and every book of the Old Testament than they who wrote it.

The *manner* also in which we use the Psalms has been considered objectionable; for that we read on just as the Psalms lie, and thus blend together those of joyful and those of sorrowful import, without distinction and without method, though we cannot be supposed to vary our affections so quick as this requires; but it should be remembered, that on the principal fasts and festivals, and on all occasional ones, Psalms proper to them are appointed out of the daily course. The present arrangement is older than our Saviour's days; the public offices of the whole Christian Churches have followed it from the very first account of them that we have; and why should we make alterations only to raise perplexities? The Psalms are indeed miscellaneous, but so are many other parts of Scripture. The book of Proverbs is vastly more so. Yet no one objects against reading those as they lie. In truth, scarce a chapter in the Bible can be read but what calls for variety of dispositions and affections to be exercised within a very small compass. Even in a short prayer, is there not great variety if it be well considered? In poetry and music these transitions are often extremely abrupt and sudden from one thing to its contrary in the highest degree, yet the mind goes along with them very easily.

Much more, then, may it do so when prepared, as in the present case, by a previous knowledge of what is to come next, and long practice in the change.

*A TABULAR VIEW OF THOSE PSALMS WHICH ARE BEST SUITED  
ADAPTED TO DEVOTIONAL PURPOSES.*

- 1. *Prayers for Forgiveness of Sins*; 6, 25, 38, 51, 102, 143.
- 2. *Prayers composed when the Psalmist was deprived of the public exercise of Religion*; 42, 43, 63, 84.
- 3. *Prayers in Affliction*; 4, 5, 9, 13, 22, 28, 41, 55, 64, 69, 70, 77, 88, 109, 120, 141, 142, 143.
- 4. *Prayers for Divine Assistance*; 7, 17, 26, 35.
- 5. *Prayers expressive of Trust and Confidence in God under Affliction*; 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 61, 71, 86.
- 6. *Prayers of Intercession*; 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.
- 7. *Psalm of Thanksgiving for general or particular Mercies*; 9, 16, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144.
- 8. *Psalm of Praise and Adoration*; 8, 19, 23, 24, 29, 33, 34, 36, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 103, 104, 107, 111, 115, 117, 121, 134, 139, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150.

The present division of the book of Psalms into several portions, a separate one for each day, and the circle of the whole comprised in the circuit of the month, is more commodious than that which was before used in the Church. The division of them into seven portions, called Nocturns, so as to be read every week, (as was practised in the Latin Church,) was too tedious; and the division into twenty portions, to be read in as many days, or two-thirds of the month, (as practised in the Greek Church,) though less tedious, must have been too uncertain, every portion perpetually changing its day, like the moveable feasts. Whereas, in our Church, each portion being fixed to its day, they are thereby rendered certain and immovable, and being enlarged in number to thirty, and so filling up the month, they cannot be deemed burdensome to the service \*.

Much respite is given to the mind by the LESSONS

\* An explanation of the Psalms, as read in the liturgy, has been published by that active clergyman, and able and useful writer, the Rev. James Slade, of Bolton-le-Moors.

following the Psalms ; for, whereas, in the work of praising, it was active; in hearing, it is only attentive. Besides, a different faculty of the mind is employed. In the Psalms, the will and affections, but in the Lessons, chiefly the understanding ; and, as with the members of the body, so also with the faculties of the mind, a change of employment prevents uneasiness and affords relief. He which prayeth in due sort is thereby made the more attentive to hear, and he which heareth, the more earnest to pray.

It is a plain dictate of reason and religion, that they who are blessed with a revelation from God should read and hear it with reverence when they assemble to worship Him. Accordingly, the Jews "read Moses and the prophets in their synagogues of old time," as we are informed in Acts xiii. 27; xv. 21; and also by writers of their own in the same age with it, who boast of the practice as a most useful and honourable distinction peculiar to their nation, that the laws of life were thus published to all the people. The primitive Christians, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian inform us, read at their meetings both the Jewish prophets, and the writings of the apostles, in proper portions.

Our Church has rectified some errors introduced by the Romish Church in this matter. By THE ROMISH CHURCH the *Scriptures were ordered to be read in a confused method, by being broken into short fragments, intermingled with passages from St. Austin's or St. Ambrose's homilies, or other worse books, and this incongruous mixture read, besides, in a language which had ceased to be understood.* OUR CHURCH hath remedied both these defects, and hath taken care that the Old Testament shall be gone through once a year, and the New thrice ; only some parts of the former are omitted, such as repetitions of what is related in other places; or mere lists of genealogies, and parts too mysti-

cal and abstruse to be edifying in public, on which account the book of Revelation is omitted, excepting two or three chapters; matters of such difficulty being wisely thought fitter for the private meditation and study of those who are qualified to engage in them.

SECTARIANS *also differ from OUR CHURCH with respect to the reading of the Scriptures in public: for they do not in general read them so copiously or so regularly,* from their leaving the selection of the parts to be read to every individual minister. Favourite chapters are repeatedly read, the whole counsel of God is not always brought before the people, and hence the different opinions which distract the (so called) religious world.

Our Church reads the books of both Testaments in the order in which they stand; only in the Old, the prophet Isaiah, containing the fullest prediction of Christ's coming and kingdom, is placed at the approach of his nativity; and in the New, the Gospels and Acts are the lessons for the morning, and the Epistles for the afternoon, thus pointing out the order and disposition of the two covenants, and the harmony that exists between them. In this manner provision is made for every day in the year; and hence, one great recommendation of daily attendance on public prayers, when there are opportunities for it is that, by means of it, we shall proceed regularly through the sacred writings, and preserve the due connexion of the several discoveries made in them to man.

There is, however, a different course for Sundays and holydays; upon Septuagesima Sunday, Genesis is begun, because then begins the season of chastening and self-mortification, to which Genesis suits best, as treating of the original of our misery by the fall of Adam, and of God's severe judgment upon the world for sin,—for which reason the reading of this book was affixed to Lent, even in the primitive ages of the

Church. Then are read forward the books as they lie in order, not all the books, but because more can attend the public worship of God on Sundays than upon any other days, such particular chapters are selected as are judged most edifying to all that are present; and if any Sunday have the history of it expressed in Scripture, such as Easter-day, Whitsunday, &c., then are proper lessons appointed. Upon saints' days, lessons are read out of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and sometimes from the Apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, which, containing excellent instructions of life and conduct, are appropriate for the days of those whose exemplary lives and death are the cause of the Church's commemoration of them, and commendation of them to us.

Other holydays, as Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, have proper lessons appointed suitable to the occasions. As for the second lessons, though generally the same course is observed on Sundays as on week days, yet on some particular holydays and saints' days, such lessons are appointed as either explain the mystery, relate the event commemorated, or apply the example.

The proper lessons are very well chosen, especially those for particular occasions; some of which, as Gen. xxii. for Good Friday, are the same which the Church used in St. Augustin's time.

There is a rubric "He that readeth so standing and turning himself, that he may best be heard," which may need some observation. The order preceding the first rubric at morning prayer, directs the morning and evening prayers "to be used in the accustomed place of the Church, Chapel, or Chancel, except it shall be otherwise determined by the Ordinary." In some of the old churches, the east end of the chancel where the minister officiated was at so great a dis-

tance from the people that they could not hear distinctly; some of the bishops, therefore, tolerated reading pews in the body of the church, a practice made general by the canons of 1603. Many of these reading-pews had two desks; one for the Book of Common Prayer, looking towards the communion table, and one for the Bible, looking towards the people. In the *ancient* Church of England, the officiating minister (in accordance with the practice of the *ancient Christian Churches*), in prayers, lauds, confessions, &c., turned *from* the people towards the East: but in such parts as were addressed to the people, he turned *towards* them \*.

During the reading of the Scriptures the congregation should not be conversing with each other or *disregarding*; but should reverently attend to what is read, considering that it is the word of God, which is the rule of their duty, and by which they shall be judged at the last day: and whensoever anything applies to their own case, whether it be *instruction*, or *correction*, or *comfort*, or *reproof*, let them take particular care thereof, and treasure it up in honest hearts, and endeavour to conduct themselves according to it in the whole course of their conversation. Thus the public reading of God's word will become profitable, and they will have reason to return God special thanks for every opportunity of hearing it, whereas otherwise it will only aggravate their sins and increase their condemnation.

The reason of reading first the Old Testament, then the New, and always somewhat out of both, is most probably that which Justin Martyr and Augustine observe in comparing the two Testaments. "The apostles," saith the one, "have taught us as them-

\* See *A call to Union on the Principles of the English Reformation*, by W. F. Hook, D.D.

selves did learn, first the precepts of the law, and then the Gospels; for what else is the law, but the Gospel foreshadowed? What other the Gospel, but the law fulfilled?" In like manner the other, "What the Old Testament hath, the very same the New containeth; but that which lieth there under a shadow is here brought forth into the open sun. Things there prefigured are here performed." Again, "In the Old Testament there is a close comprehension of the New; in the New an open discovery of the Old. To be short, this method of public reading either did purposely tend, or at the leastwise doth fitly serve, that from smaller things the minds of the hearers may go forward to the knowledge of greater, and by degrees climb up from the lowest to the highest things."

The minister before every lesson is to give notice, "Here beginneth such a chapter," &c. It is a very judicious direction, that any of the congregation who have Bibles may look out for the lessons, and so quicken their attention by reading them with the minister. The ancient written copies of the Bible were not divided into verses, nor even (except the Psalms) into chapters. When synagogues, or places for reading the law, were first built, and certain portions of it were to be read every Sabbath-day, it then became necessary to have some mark to distinguish these portions. This was done in the ancient, and continues to be done in the modern Hebrew copies of the Jewish law, by affixing the letter P, or Ph, which is the first letter of the Hebrew word Pharasha, signifying *separation* or *division*. Our Bibles copy this plan, not in marking out the same divisions of the Scripture, but merely in putting the black P or T, to remind us that there is a *new* paragraph or division of the subject. When we see this, we make a pause, and begin a fresh subject, or another train of thought and reasoning upon that subject.

We will conclude this chapter with some notice of important points of difference between the Church of England and that of Rome.

Our Church differs considerably from the Romish in their respective rules of faith. THE ROMISH CHURCH “receives and reverences with equal piety and veneration the written books of the Old and New Testaments, and certain unwritten traditions pertaining both to faith and manners.” THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND pronounces the “sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures alone for salvation.” THE ROMISH CHURCH, among the sacred and canonical works of the Old Testament, includes the books of the *Apocrypha*, which she pronounces “all and every part of them as entitled to be received with equal piety and veneration.” THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND places these “other books” in an inferior class, and declares, as has been already observed, that she “does not apply them to establish any doctrine.” THE CHURCH OF ROME receives the Scriptures as they are contained in the old *Vulgate Latin edition*, ordaining that it shall be held authentic in all public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, and that no one shall dare to reject it under any pretence whatsoever. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, on the contrary, rejects the Latin *Vulgate*, and has provided for herself a “translation out of the original Hebrew and Greek tongues.” These are fundamental differences between the two Churches, as to affect the foundation of all religious instruction.

With regard to the right of private interpretation of the Scriptures, moreover, the Church of England differs from the Romish Church, and also from other Protestant communities. THE CHURCH OF ROME *setteth the judgment by a claim to absolute submission to authority*. *Sectarians* at home, following the example of foreign reformed Churches, *give unbounded licence*

*to the fancy by the unrestricted exercise of private interpretation. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND is equally distant from both these extremes ; she allows no rivalship indeed of Church authority with the Scriptures ; she throws aside all restriction upon fair inquiry ; she upholds the mental liberty of the lowest of her members, but she guards against this liberty degenerating into licentiousness, by inculcating a discriminative yet undeviating reverence for pious antiquity : a reverence alike sanctioned by reason, inspired by feeling, and recommended by authority.* This principle is, in truth, a special characteristic of our Church ; a principle which has ever enabled her to combine discursiveness with consistency, freedom of inquiry with orthodoxy of belief, and vigorous good sense with primitive and elevated piety.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MORNING PRAYER,—CONTINUED.

#### THE TE DEUM TO THE END OF THE CREED.

THE TE DEUM is a hymn so called from the first words of it in Latin, in which language it was composed in the fourth century. It was received into the offices of the Church in the sixth, and has been with propriety retained by the venerable compilers of our liturgy. It is one of the most excellent pieces of devotion ever written, the structure only being human, whilst the materials are of divine and sacred derivation. In it we recognise the sublimest passages of the prophet Isaiah, the grandest truths of the Gospel history, and the most pathetic supplications of the book of Psalms. It is indeed a noble hymn to the Holy Trinity, worthy of the spouse of

Christ, rational and majestic, and among all the composes of man uninspired, this may justly claim the first place. Some have ascribed it to Ambrose and Augustin, others to Abondius, Nicetius bishop of Triers, or Hilary of Poictiers, but there is no way of determining the author. Some reasons however seem to justify the opinion that it was composed in the Church of Gaul. (See PALMER'S *Orig. Liturg.*)

It contains three particulars,—1st, *An act of praise* offered to God by us and by all creatures, as well in earth as in heaven, particularly the angels and “spirits of the just made perfect” join with us. 2nd, *A confession of faith* (commencing at the verse “The Holy Ghost, throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee,”) declaring the general consent to it, and the particulars of it, namely, concerning every Person in the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and more fully concerning the Son, as to his divinity, his humanity, and particularly his incarnation, death, present glory, and return to judgment. 3rd, *A supplication grounded upon it*, (commencing at “We therefore pray Thee,”) first, for all his people, that they may be preserved here, and saved hereafter: second, for ourselves, who daily praise Him, that we may be kept from future sin, and pardoned for what is passed, because we trust in Him.

To the following terms a few further observations may be devoted:—

(Heavens cry aloud.) By the contemplation of their wonderful beauty the glory of their Creator is seen. A like expression occurs Psalm xix. (Sabbath.) This does not mean (though it be a truth, though a very inferior one,) that God is peculiarly “Lord of the Sabbath” day; it is the plural number of a Hebrew word, signifying armies or hosts, and is so translated in the Greek and Latin versions of the

Scriptures, as also in the English, in Rom. ix. 29; James v. 4; as comprehending more than can well be expressed by a single term of any other language. Its meaning is, that God is the sovereign Lord of the "innumerable company of angels," Heb. xii. 22; of the host of heaven, which the heathen worshipped, the sun, moon, and stars; of the hosts of all nations upon earth, particularly the Jewish people, whom He led forth to battle; and lastly of the Christian Church, which the Old Testament foretold would be "terrible as an army with banners," Cantic. iv. 10, and the New describes as furnished with weapons of warfare "mighty through God to the casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Him, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. (True and only Son.) Christ is God's *true* Son, because he is not barely adopted, as we are in baptism, but very God of very God, by eternal generation. (Didst not abhor the virgin's womb.) Condescended to change the glories of the Godhead for the virgin's womb. (Opened the kingdom of heaven to *all* believers.) By this it is not meant that it was not open at all till then, any more than that light and immortality were not at all brought to light before the Gospel; but as the light which men had antecedently to our Saviour's coming was augmented inexpressibly by it, so the kingdom of heaven was set open vastly wider, in consequence of his sufferings, to receive believers, not from one people only and their neighbours, but from the whole globe. (Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!) This title is given to him by the inspired Psalmist, in the 24th Psalm, which is a plain prophecy of his ascension into heaven, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in;" and then follows, "Who is this King of

Glory ! The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory !” It is remarkable that this title of *the Lord of Hosts*, which is never bestowed on any but the one Supreme God, is here expressly applied to Christ, as it is in several other places, even to Him, “who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen,” Rom. ix. 5 ; and whom St. Paul elsewhere calls, “The Lord of Glory,” 1 Cor. ii. 8. Indeed the proofs of his divinity in every part of the Bible are innumerable ; both the Old and the New Testament proclaiming him to be what this hymn styles him, the *everlasting* Son of the Father.

The doxology is not repeated after this as it is after all other hymns, because it is chiefly a paraphrase on the doxology,—the same hymn to the blessed Trinity, only drawn into a larger form,—and seeing that the language of it is wonderfully sublime and affectionate, and that we cannot utter anything more pious and heavenly, let our souls be warmed with corresponding affections ; let us *mentally* speak the versicles which we do not pronounce with our lips, and make the whole hymn one continued act of ardent and intense devotion. Much it is to be regretted that many are extremely careless in the use of it, repeating it with as little attention and zeal as if they did not regard what they said, or *to whom* the words are directed. It might be useful for the clergy to pause after they have said “Here endeth the first lesson,” that the people may have time to rise from their seats and be prepared for the recital of it. Indeed the same method should be observed before the beginning of any other psalm or hymn after either lesson, in either morning or evening prayer.

The “CANTICLE,” or song of praise, sometimes substituted for the Te Deum, is also called “The song of the three children,” because Shadrach and his faithful brethren sung it after their miraculous preser-

vation from the fiery furnace. It was adopted into the devotions of the early Christians, and seems especially applicable when the first lesson treats of the creation, or any extraordinary exercise of God's power or interposition of his providence, especially that recorded in the third chapter of Daniel.—This and the Te Deum being the only hymns used in the service of our Church that are of man's composing, shows her especial care, beyond even the ancient churches, in singing to God, to sing in the words of God. It has been made matter of objection that we invoke the "spirits and souls of the righteous to bless the Lord," and it might as well be said, that we call upon the heavens and the other works of creation to bless Him. This is plainly no more than a figure of speech, though a very sublime one; lending, as it were, a tongue to inanimate creatures, and calling both on those who do not, and those which cannot hear us, to glorify our common Maker, just as is done in the 148th Psalm, of which this canticle is an evident imitation.

The hymn called "BENEDICTUS," is the prophecy uttered on the birth of John the Baptist, and is a thanksgiving for the redemption of mankind, of which he was to publish the speedy approach. Its style is nearly that of the Jewish prophets, who described spiritual blessings by temporal imagery; and so it may teach us both the fitness and the method of assigning to the Old Testament predictions an evangelical interpretation. It may be read with peculiar propriety when the second lesson relates to John the Baptist, or to the commencement of our Lord's history. The people in repeating it should bear in mind that the words, "Thou child shalt be called the prophet of the Highest," relate, *not to our Saviour, but to the Baptist.*

The 100th PSALM is peculiarly appropriate after a

lesson from the Gospel, because it peculiarly relates to the Gospel times, as appears from its inviting *all* lands to be joyful in the Lord, declaring them equally God's people and the sheep of his pasture, and calling upon them equally to "go into his gates, and praise Him for his mercy and his truth." David could only look forward to these blessings with the eye of faith,—we have them in possession. May we all accordingly so praise and serve Him in his courts here below, that we may for ever "dwell in his tabernacle, and rest on his holy hill" above, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the first and brightest days of the Church, when the truth was received in all simplicity and purity, none thought of questioning the great truths insisted upon by Christ as articles of a Christian's faith, or of drawing nice and subtle distinctions respecting them; and therefore all that it was considered necessary to demand of those who wished to be admitted into Christian fellowship was that they should declare their belief that the man Jesus, who had been crucified, was the promised Messiah, the Son of God; it being considered, that if any one believed this, he believed also all those other truths connected with this which Christ had himself proclaimed, and to which the Scriptures generally bore testimony. To this effect the eunuch, when Philip had said unto him, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized," answered and confessed his faith, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and he was baptized immediately upon that confession. It was, however, soon discovered that under this general confession of faith in Jesus Christ, numerous corruptions of the truth were propagated by presumptuous men, "who intruded into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind," and who, instead of being content

to terminate their inquiries by the plain declarations of Scripture, indulged vainly curious speculations concerning mysteries which are far too exalted for human comprehension. Their more pernicious errors were concerning the nature and mode of existence in the Godhead. One great object in Christ raising up a distinct and separate order of men for the work of the ministry was, as St. Paul informs us, Eph. iv., that they might preserve the unity of the Church, and provide against the members thereof being tossed about with every wind of doctrine. Mindful therefore of the duties incumbent upon them, the overseers of Christ's Church no sooner became aware of heresies corrupting the truth, and for which they were bound earnestly to contend, than they drew up creeds or short summaries of faith, and commanded them everywhere to be taught, in order to repress the growth of error, and keep men's minds steadfast in the original faith once delivered to the saints.

The creed in the morning service is called THE APOSTLES' CREED, not so much from any certainty that the apostles drew it up in these very expressions, but not only from its containing a brief summary of the doctrines taught by the apostles\*, but because its birth can be traced from the apostolic times. It is true, the exact form of this creed is not so ancient by a hundred years; but a form not much different from it was used long before. Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, when he repeats a creed not much unlike this, assures us that the Church dispersed throughout the world had received this faith from the apostles and their disciples, which is also affirmed by Tertullian of one of his creeds, that

\* "It is a fact worthy of remark, that the twelve articles of which this creed consists, may be collected from the discourses of St. Peter, in the first chapter of the book of the Acts."—TOWNSEND's *New Testament arranged in chronological order*.

"that rule of faith had been current in the Church from the beginning of the Gospel;" and it is observable, that although there was so great a diversity of creeds, as that scarcely two churches did exactly agree therein (every bishop possessing the power of forming a creed for his diocese), yet the form and substance of every creed was in a great measure the same; so that except there had been from the very plantation of Christianity, a form of sound words, or a system of faith delivered by the first planters thereof, it is not easy to conceive how all churches should harmonize, not only in the articles themselves, into which they were baptized, but in a great measure also in the method and order of them. St. Paul seems to allude to some summary of the Christian faith at the time in existence, which in Rom. vi. 17, he calls a "form of doctrine," and in 2 Tim. i. 13, a "form of sound words."

The creed holds an appropriate place in our liturgy, for it occurs immediately after the lessons; and since faith cometh by hearing God's word, and the Gospel doth not profit without faith, it is very fit, after hearing thereof, that we should make profession of our Christian faith. And 2ndly, it is equally proper that we should repeat it *before* we proceed to offer up our petitions, as being the foundation of them, and we "cannot call on Him, on whom we have not believed," Rom. x. 14; and since we are to pray to God the Father in the name of the Son, by the assistance of the Spirit, for remission of sins, and a joyful resurrection, we ought first to declare that we believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that there is remission here, and resurrection hereafter, to be had for all true members of the Catholic Church, and then we may be said to pray in faith.

We may receive several benefits from using this creed in public worship. 1st, The fixing it firmly in

our memories, that so we may never forget this blessed rule of our prayers, nor be at any time without this necessary touchstone to try all doctrines by.

2ndly, The renewing our profession of fidelity to Almighty God, and repeating that watchword which was given us when we were first listed under Christ's banner, declaring thereby that we retain our allegiance to him, and remain his faithful servants and soldiers, will move him the sooner to hear our prayers for his aid.

3rdly, We declare our unity amongst ourselves, and show ourselves to be members of that holy Catholic Church, by and for which these common prayers are made ; those who hold this faith, and those only, have a right to pray thus, nor can any others expect to be admitted to join in them ; and, therefore, this creed is the symbol and badge to manifest who are fit to make these prayers, and receive the benefit of them.

In our use of this sacred form we should, in the first place, be heartily thankful to God for revealing these divine, mysterious, and saving truths to us ; and though the doxology be only set at the end of St. Athanasius' creed, yet the duty of thanksgiving must be performed upon every repetition of this creed also ; 2ndly, We must give our positive and particular assent to every article as we go along, and receive it as an infallible oracle from the mouth of God, and for this reason we must repeat it with an audible voice after the minister, and in our mind annex that word, " I believe," to every particular article ; for though it be but once expressed in the beginning, yet it must be supplied, and must be understood in every article ; and to show our consent the more evidently, we must stand up when we repeat it, and resolve to stand up stoutly in defence thereof, so as if need were to defend it, or seal the truth of it with our blood. 3rdly,

We must devoutly apply every article as we go along; to be both a ground of our prayers, and a guide to our lives; for if we rightly believe the power of the Father, the love of the Son, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, it will encourage us (who are members of the Catholic Church,) to pray heartily for all spiritual and temporal blessings, and give us very lively hopes of obtaining all our requests. Again, since these holy principles were not revealed and selected out from all other truths for any other end but to make us live more holily; therefore we must consider how it is fit that man should live, who believes that God the Father is his Creator, God the Son his Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost his Sanctifier; who believes that he is a member of that Catholic Church wherein there is a communion of saints and remission for sins, and shall be a resurrection of the body, and a life everlasting afterwards. No man is so ignorant but he can tell what manner of persons they ought to be who believe this, and it is evident that whoever firmly and fully believes all this, his faith will certainly and necessarily produce a holy life.

The Jews, when they worshipped, turned their faces towards the mercy-seat; so did the primitive Christians look towards the altar, of which the mercy-seat was a type—and where God affords his most gracious and mysterious presence. They built also their churches towards the East, because they expected the next coming of the *Sun of Righteousness* to be from thence; and, as the practice was intended only to honour him, it ought not to be condemned as superstitious,—and yet being neither obligatory in itself, nor commanded by authority, omission of it ought not to be censured as irreverence or disobedience.

To bow at the name of Jesus in the creed, seems founded upon a Scripture command,—Isai. xlvi. 23;

Phil. ii. 9,—spiritual in design, but not without reference to outward adoration. There is no rubric directing the practice ; it is, however, enjoined by the 18th Canon, which is based on an injunction of our pious Reformers\*, (see Injunctions by Queen Elizabeth, Sparrow's collection, page 81.) The canon directs that “when in time of Divine service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present, as it has been accustomed, testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures, their inward humility, Christian resolution, and due acknowledgment, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world, in whom alone all the mercies, graces, and promises of God to mankind for this life, and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised.”

Jesus is our Saviour's personal name, it was given him by the angel at the Annunciation ; Christ denotes his office, as he was the Anointed of God. Heretics in the time of the apostles, denied that the man Jesus was the Christ, they asserted that Christ, or the Holy Spirit, dwelt in Jesus as in other holy men. \* \* \* St. John opposed this heresy in his epistles. It is not at the name of *Christ* we bow, but at that of *Jesus*. By this action we acknowledge the *man* Jesus to be the Christ, the Saviour of the world. We hereby bear our testimony against the heresy of Cerinthus, and the modern Socinians. To bow at the great name of God would not distinguish us from Jews or Mohammedans, or even heathens, for they all acknowledge a God. Nor at the name of Christ, for the Jews *expect* the Messiah to come. They deny the *man* Jesus to be the Messiah. Therefore to bow at the name of Jesus, is to acknowledge the *man* Jesus to be the

\* “ To kneel in prayer, and to bow at the name of Jesus, is not therefore popish, unless our *Martyr-Reformers* were *Papists*.”—Dr. Hook.

Saviour of the world, which is a complete demonstration that we hold the Christian faith.

PARAPHRASE ON THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I make this confession of my faith, relating to those truths which, upon the testimony of God, are revealed to me; I believe that there is one only God, Deut. iv. 35; 1 Cor. viii. 6; that He is father of all men by creation, Mal. ii. 10; by redemption, Deut. xxxii. 6; adoption, 1 John iii. 1; but in a peculiar manner the Father of our blessed Lord by eternal generation, Heb. i. 1, 2; John vi. 57. I believe further, that this one God is "Almighty," and is vested with an infinite power of doing all things, Isai. xlv. 12; Rev. xix. 6, and governing all things at his pleasure, 1 Chron. xxix. 11; Jer. xvi. 21; that He was the "Maker of heaven and earth," that is, the whole world, and everything contained therein, Exod. xx. 11; John i. 10; Col. i. 16.

I believe likewise in "Jesus Christ," being verily persuaded that he is what his name Jesus signifies, the Saviour of the world, Luke i. 31; Matt. i. 21; Acts xiii. 23; that he is Christ or the Messiah, which was so long before his coming promised under the Old Testament, Gen. xxi. 12, and xlvi. 10; Mal. iii. 1. That he is the "only Son" of God, begotten from all eternity, partly as being said to come down from heaven, John vi. 38; partly because he is recorded in Scripture to have made the worlds, Heb. i. 2; Col. i. 16; partly by reason he is frequently called God, John i. 1; Phil. ii. 6, 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rom. ix. 5; but chiefly because of the Divine essence being communicated to him, John xvi. 15, and v. 26; 2 Cor. iv. 4; and that in a manner different from all created beings, Heb. i. 13. Who is likewise "our Lord," by being the true Jehovah or Lord, Hos. i. 7; Matt. iii. 8;

by having all things put under his dominion, Psalm cx. 5; by redeeming us from the power of the devil, who before had got the master over us, Heb. ii. 14; Col. ii. 15; by purchasing us by his blood, Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 7; by our voluntarily becoming his servants and scholars by baptism, Rom. vi. 6, 13. I believe further, that though Christ was true man, Heb. iv. 15, yet, that he was not produced after the ordinary manner of human conception, but by the overshadowing "of the Holy Ghost, Luke i. 35; was born of Mary," a poor maid of the lineage of David, who was a Virgin, notwithstanding that miraculous birth, Luke i. 27; that he suffered an ignominious death, as was foretold, Isai. liii. 9; Mark ix. 12; and this at the time when "Pontius Pilate" was governor under the Romans, in Judea, Matt. xxvii. 2; was nailed to a cross, a terrible and scandalous punishment by which the Romans used to put their wicked slaves to death; that under this grievous punishment he became really "dead," Luke xxiii. 46; Mark xv. 37; and after that, by a third disciple, was "buried, and descended into hell\*", or hades, the place of separate souls, Isai. v. 14; Psalm xvi. 10; on "the third day" after his crucifixion he "rose again," Matt. xvi. 21; Mark ix. 31, as he had before foretold, Matt. xxvii. 63; after that, in the sight of a great many credible witnesses, he, in a most glorious manner, ascended up into heaven, Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9, 10, as the prophets had long before predicted, Psalm lviii. 18; Micah ii. 13; and was shortly after advanced to a most especial honour, which

\* The word *hell* is derived from the participle *helle*, of the Saxon verb *hilla*, to hide, and accordingly in its primary and original acceptation signifies an invisible or hidden place, and this article of the creed was inserted to bear testimony to the actual separation of Christ's body and soul after his crucifixion; that he was not merely in a trance for the three days, during which his body remained in the grave; but that his soul really quitted his body, and went to the place where the departed souls of men are reserved, waiting for the great and final day of their resurrection.

was never vouchsafed to any person before, Heb. i. 13 ; "to sit on the right hand of God," Luke xxii. 69 ; 1 Peter iii. 22 ; which is a place of the greatest dignity in heaven, 1 Kings ii. 19 ; Heb. viii. 1 ; where he has begun his spiritual kingdom, and treads upon the necks of the great enemies of his jurisdiction, sin, Rom. vi. 14, satan, Heb. ii. 14, and death, 1 Cor. xv. 26 ; who, at the end of the world, shall come in a triumphant and glorious procession, attended with the angels, 2 Thess. i. 7 ; Matt. xxv. 31 ; shall have all power committed to him, John v. 22, 27 ; Acts xvii. 31, to judge those who shall then be alive, 1 Thess. iv. 15 ; 1 Cor. xv. 51, and those who shall be raised up from their graves, Matt. xxv. 32.

I believe the "Holy Ghost" to be very God, and the third person of the blessed Trinity ; that he is not a virtue or grace, as some fondly imagine, but a person, Eph. iv. 30 ; Rom. viii. 26 ; Acts x. 19 ; who is called frequently "the Comforter," John xiv. 26 ; xv. 26 ; xvi. 7 ; and is expressly named God, Acts v. 3, 4. I further believe, that there is a number of men, sequestered from the rest of the world by faith in Christ, and governed by his laws ; who have continued throughout all ages from the apostles' time, and shall do so till the coming of Christ, which I call "the Catholic Church," which is "holy," 2 Tim. ii. 19, by reason of the holy profession which they are called to, though all the particular members are not so, Matt. xiii. 24, 47. It is likewise "Catholic" or universal, because it is not confined to any particular age or nation, but diffused throughout the world, Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Luke xxiv. 47. I believe that there is a "communion of the saints," and elect people of God, 1 Cor. vi. 11 ; Eph. i. 13 ; with God the Father, 1 John i. 3 ; with God the Son, John xvii. 21 ; 1 Cor. i. 9 ; with the Holy Ghost, Phil. ii. 1 ; Rom. viii. 9 ; and with all the

saints in all the churches now upon the earth, 1 John i. 7; as also with all the saints departed, Heb. xii. 22, 23. I believe further, that whereas by our sins we become debtors to God's justice, 1 John iii. 4; Matt. v. 22; so, through the blood of Christ, who has made satisfaction for them, Matt. xx. 28; 2 Cor. v. 18; Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 20, we may obtain "forgiveness" of them, not only in baptism, Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; Eph. v. 26, but afterwards if we truly repent of them, 1 John iv. 10, and ii. 1. I believe likewise "the resurrection of the body," not only as a thing possible to be done by an Almighty agent, Luke i. 37; Acts xxvi. 8; Matt. x. 28, but as a thing generally expected by the Jews, Job xix. 25; Dan. xii. 2; that this is clearly promised under the Gospel, Rom. xiv. 9; viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 21; and moreover that the selfsame body shall rise again, 1 Cor. xv. 23; Rom. viii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 10; and lastly, that the resurrection shall extend to bad as well as good men, 1 Cor. xv. 22; John v. 28. Finally, I believe the "everlasting" duration of all bad men in misery, Matt. xxv. 45, 46, and x. 20; Luke iii. 17; Rev. xx. 10; and of all good men in a state of glory, which does arise from a vacancy from all sorrow, Rev. xxi. 4, from the vision of God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2, as also from unimaginable, unspeakable pleasures, which they shall then partake of, 1 Cor. ii. 9.—Amen.

Each article of our faith teaches us some important part of our duty. When we profess to believe in "God the Father Almighty," we should learn to love, fear, and obey, so good, awful, and great a being as God is. From "Jesus," we should seek salvation; from "Christ," the anointed, as a Prophet, instruction; as a Priest, atonement; as a King, protection; as "the only begotten Son," the adoption of children; as "our Lord," we should serve him,—for his wonder-

ful conception, in faith,—for his nativity, in humility,—for his sufferings, in patience,—for his cross, in crucifying sin,—for his descent, in meditating on another world,—for his resurrection, in newness of life,—for his ascension, in setting our affection on things above, on the pleasures at God's right hand,—for his return again to judge the world, in awe of his second coming,—for his judgment, in judging ourselves before we come to be judged by him. From the "Spirit," we should seek the health of saving grace, that so in the "Church" we may partake of a high and heavenly calling,—in the "holy" Church, of sanctification,—in the "Catholic" Church, of communion with our brethren in prayers and sacraments, in brotherly love, and peace, and good will; and all this in order to a firm persuasion of the "remission of sins," as well as a confident hope of "resurrection" and translation to "life everlasting."—Let us, then, put these questions every one to himself, and have a direct answer from our own heart, Is my life answerable to my faith? Does my faith purify my heart? Does it produce obedience to the commands of God? Does it make me sensible of my sin and misery? Does it make me seek for in earnest and value a Redeemer? Do I find myself governed by the Holy Spirit of God? Do I labour to secure the forgiveness of my sins, by a true repentance and amendment, when I have done amiss? Do these amazing truths—everlasting life and everlasting misery—awaken in me a concern answerable to what I am to gain or lose? I may then judge whether my faith is saving, or whether it is only the faith of hypocrites. If the latter, these articles of our creed will only be so many articles of condemnation; from which judgment and condemnation may God deliver us all, for the Lord Jesus' sake!

## CHAPTER VIII.

MORNING PRAYER, CONTINUED,—AND THE ORDER  
FOR EVENING PRAYER.

THE MUTUAL SALUTATION OF THE MINISTER AND PEOPLE are not a prayer, they are rather the expression of their mutual wish, that they may be fitted to pray. The practice is of very great antiquity, and the expressions here used are strictly Scriptural; that of the minister is found in Ruth ii. 4; that of the people, in 2 Tim. iv. 22. Care should be taken that a difference be made in the tone of voice, between these forms of *mutual* compellation, and the *prayers to God*. There is an apparent propriety in introducing them on the present occasion; for the people are going to pray, which they cannot do without God's help, and therefore the minister prays that the "Lord may be with them" in the duty; and since the minister prays for all the people, and is their mouth to God, they say, "The Lord be with thy spirit,"—may He be with thee, as thou desirest He may be with us, in the offering of our joint prayer.

In ancient liturgies, the deacon used to call upon the people often, "Let us pray vehemently," that is with earnestness; that our prayers may be such as St. James speaks of, active, lively-spirited prayers, for these are they that must prevail with God; and there is none of us but must think it needful thus to be called up and awakened, for thoughts will be wandering, and devotion will abate, and scarce hold out to the prayer's end, thought it be but a short one. This form, to awake and keep alive our devotion, is therefore wisely planned, and should be thankfully received.

Sometimes the words seem to be an invitation to another form of petitioning, as in the litany, and other places ; it being as much as to say, let us collect our alternate supplications by versicles and answers into collects and prayers.

Prayer is the utterance of the heart : it is a deep feeling within a man, of his wants, and poverty, and helplessness ; it is the turn of a desolate spirit to its Spirit, and Creator, and Saviour ; it is a following hard after God ; it is a drawing near to Him, holding intercourse with Him, pouring out the heart before Him, a striving to fill an empty soul out of his fulness. Do you ask what prayer is ? Look at the publican in the temple, " standing afar off he would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner ! " —that was prayer. Look at blind Bartimæus, sitting by the highway side, he cried out so that none could silence him, " Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me ! " —that too was prayer. Look at Peter, as he was sinking in the waves of the sea of Galilee, " Lord, " he exclaimed, " save me ! " —and that also was prayer. Unless we are sensible of our want and our misery, and are sensible that God, and no other can supply or remove it, we cannot draw nigh in spirit to the throne of grace. We can take up, indeed, the form and language of prayer, without any such conviction ; but it is the form—it is the language—and no more. The heart that knows not of its wretchedness is dumb before the God of consolation. The soul that has not learnt to renounce its dependence on created things, and its trust to lying vanities for comfort or protection, will forsake its own mercies, and will fail to look up to that God besides whom there is no Saviour. The leading features of true prayer may be considered as comprising serious-

ness, humility, faith, and perseverance or importunity. However deep our feeling of unworthiness, we are yet authorized and encouraged to approach God with confidence; through the only but all-sufficient Mediator, Jesus Christ. Looking inward, we are stricken dumb; but looking upward, we speak and prevail.

THE VERSICLES BEFORE THE WORDS "LET US PRAY," are a humble confession and petition for mercy, addressed to every person in the blessed Trinity, and a fit introduction to the divine prayer, sanctified by the lips of our Lord, which we are about to repeat. By placing it before this prayer, the Church seems to intimate two things: —1st, As to the *object* of our worship; that this prayer, and by consequence our other prayers, of which this ought to be the pattern, is to be *directed to the Trinity*; and that by the word "Father," in the preface to it, not the first Person alone, but the other two are equally included: for we pray not, saying, their Father, but "our Father." 2nd, As to the *manner* of our worship; that we ought with all humility to approach His Majesty, acknowledge that it is through his mercy we presume to call Him "Father," a name which the Jews never used in prayer, having received the "spirit of bondage to fear," Rom. viii. 15; whereas we Christians have received at our baptism the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba, Father," and for this reason the Catechumens in the ancient Church, though embracing the faith, and taught therein, yet being unbaptized, and so unqualified to call God "Father," were not allowed to be present at the Lord's prayer, that prayer being then used only in the communion service, which began after the Catechumens were dismissed.

THE LORD'S PRAYER is again repeated in the service, because we use it here with a different view; as before we subjoined it to our confession, to obtain the confir-

ination of our pardon, so now we prefix it to our requests as a summary for our desires. Besides, if our minds are alive to its real excellencies, the fervency of our devotions will not be at all abated by the frequent use of it; nay, it may fairly be presumed, that to have this pattern before us, which our Saviour himself hath shewed us, will rather tend to animate our souls, and lead us to urge our petitions with renewed zeal, than be any impediment to our intercourse with the Father at the throne of grace.

The priest is sometimes appointed to *kneel*, sometimes to *stand*. Being a man of like infirmities with the rest of the congregation, a sinner, and so standing in need of grace and pardon as well as the rest, in all confessions of sins and penitential prayers, such as the Litany is, he is directed to beg His pardon and grace upon his knees. He being, moreover, a priest or minister of the Most High God, that hath received from Him an office and authority, sometimes stands, to signify that, his office and authority; which office of his may be considered either in relation to God or the people. As it relates to God, he is God's ambassador, 2. Cor. v. 20, to whom is committed the "ministry of reconciliation;" in which respect he is to "teach, baptize, consecrate the holy Eucharist, bless and absolve the penitent;" and in all these acts of authority, which he does in the name and person of Christ, he is to stand. As his office relates to the people, so he is in their stead, for them appointed by God, to offer up gifts and sacrifices unto God, particularly the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, together with their prayers. So we read, Heb. v. 1, "Every high priest," or priest, (so the words are promiscuously used, Heb. viii. 3, 4,) "taken from among men, is ordained for men," or in their stead, "in things pertaining to God, to offer up both gifts and sacrifices for sins." Which definition

of a priest, belongs not only to a priest of the Law, but also to a priest or minister of the Gospel. So that the ministers of the Gospel are appointed by God to offer up the sacrifices of prayers and praises of the Church for the people, thus to stand between God and them ; and to show this his office, in these offices, he is directed to stand. By this we may see what advantage it is to the people, that their prayers are offered up by a priest. For God's having appointed him to this office, will certainly assist and accept his own constitution ; and though the minister be wicked or indecent in his prayers, yet God, that will punish him this neglect in himself, will certainly accept his office for the people.

The petition, " Make thy chosen people joyful," as well as the two following, is taken from the Psalms, and it is plain that the words " thy chosen people," or, as in the original, " the saints," and thy people, " and their inheritance," all mean precisely the same thing, being applied by the Psalmist to the Jews, and by us to the whole body of Christians ; for by these and such like titles, both the one and the other are usually distinguished from the heathens, or unbelievers, in the sacred writings\*.

In the latter clause of the petition, " Give peace," &c., " because none other that fighteth for us," &c., we assign the reason why we have recourse to God for the blessing of peace, namely, that vain is the help of man. God only can fight for us successfully ; and therefore it is to Him we apply to restrain our enemies, or overthrow them.

THE COLLECTS are short, pious, and impressive prayers, collected from the holy Scriptures, ushered in with such attributes of God as are proper and suitable

\* For further information on this topic, see WALDO on the *Liturgy*, abridged by BERENS.

to the petitions contained in them, and offered up in the name and through the mediation of Jesus Christ. They derive their name, either from being collected out of the Epistle or Gospel ; or repeated when the people were publicly *collected* together ; or containing a brief *collection* of petitions for everything needful for our soul and body. They are generally directed to the Father, *through* the Son \*, and usually begin with the motive inducing us to ask, and then mention some great or comprehensive blessing desired. There being not one long-continued prayer, but divers short ones, has many advantages to gain esteem ; the practice of the Jews of old, in whose prescribed devotions we find a certain number of several prayers or collects to be said together ; the example of our Lord in prescribing a short form ; the judgment and practice of the ancient Christians in their liturgies ; and they are most convenient for keeping away coldness, distractions, and illusions from our devotions ; and that not only in respect of the minister, but of the people also, whose minds and affections become hereby more erect, close, and earnest, by the often breathing out of their hearty concurrence, by saying Amen together at the end of each collect.

A few of the collects are directed to Christ, and some, especially for great festivals, conclude with the acknowledgment, that Christ, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God world

\* " When our Church teaches us to conclude every prayer in this manner, and carefully avoids the omission of it, does she not point out to us, that our very prayers are imperfect and defiled, and that our earnest petitions and devout praises must all be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and perfumed with the incense of his sacrifice, or they cannot be acceptable to God ? That not only do our sins need the stonement of Christ, but our best duties also ? That nothing we can do is pleasing to God, except it spring from faith in the Redeemer, and be offered through his merits."—*CLOSE'S Sermons.*

without end. It may here be observed, that in the litany there are supplications to the Holy Ghost, and in the ordination services a precatory hymn to him. This seems to be done to testify what the Scripture warrants, that although for more congruity, we, in the general course of our prayers, go to the Father by the Son, yet we may also invoke both the Son and Holy Ghost, and that when we call upon one, we equally worship and glorify all three together.

The collects are mostly taken from a liturgy in use in the Western Church, in the sixth century, which was compiled from liturgies then existing. They have been in the Church of England for 1200 years, and in the Church at large for 1400 years; and their origin lies in the distant glory of primitive Christianity. Some of these collects had been corrupted by superstitious alterations and additions, others were quite left out of the Roman missals, and entire new ones, relating to the innovations of that Church, added in their room;—the wisdom and moderation of our Reformers was here conspicuous; they examined every collect strictly, and where they found any of them corrupted, they corrected them; and at the Restoration every collect was again reviewed, and whatever was expressed imperfectly or improperly was supplied and rectified. An examination will show how judiciously the good was preserved, while the unwholesome excrescences and dross were rejected, *seeing that every one of them disowns the Romish doctrine of merit, &c., and acknowledges our unworthiness, and our faith in Christ as our alone Mediator.* Our Reformers considered that we ought to depart from the *corruptions* only of the Romish Church; and when these were entirely corrected or cast off, it would have argued a strange and scandalous perverseness not to retain those parts or offices, the soundness whereof was evident, by their being expressly con-

tained in, or undeniably founded on the word of God himself\*.

INDEX TO THE SUBJECTS OF THE SEVERAL COLLECTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF PRAYER, PRAISE, AND THANKSGIVING.

*Affliction*, for deliverance and support under ; 3rd Epiph., 8th Trin., 5th Lent.

*Angels*, for the guardianship of ; St. Michael's day.

*Charity*. See *Love*.

*Chastity*, for ; 1st Lent.

*Christ*, for the imitation of ; Sunday before Easter, 2nd after Easter. For the Benefits of his Death ; Annunciation.

*Church*, for the Universal ; 5th Epiph., 3rd after Easter, St. John Evangelist, two first for Good Friday. For the Unity of the Church ; St. Simon, and St. Jude. For the Peace of the Church ; 5th, 16th, and 22nd Trin.

*Comfort*, for spiritual ; Sunday after Ascension.

*Contrition*, for ; Ash Wednesday.

*Covetousness*, against ; St. Matthew's day.

*Courage*, for Christian ; St. John Baptist.

*Enemies*, for deliverance from ; 3rd Lent.

*Example*, that we may follow the Example of Christ ; Sunday next before Easter, and 2nd after Easter.

*Faith*, for a right and firm ; Trinity Sunday, St. Thomas, St. Mark. For Faith, Hope, and Charity ; 14th Trin.

*Grace*, for Grace and Assistance in our Christian Course ; 4th Advent, 2nd Lent, Easter day, 3rd after Easter, 1st, 7th, 13th Trin.

*Heaven*, for heavenly desires ; Ascension day. For admittance to the enjoyment of God in Heaven ; Epiph., 6th Epiph., Sunday after Ascension.

*Humility*, for Humility and Patience ; Sunday before Easter.

*Illumination*, for ; Whitsunday, 1st Epiph., 9th Trin.

*Judgments*, for deliverance from ; Septuages., Quinquages., 4th Lent.

*Love*, for the love of God and his laws ; 4th after Easter, 6th 7th, and 14th Trin. For Love and Charity ; Quinquages.

\* For a table of the collects, showing their origin, time of composition, and the principal variations they have undergone, see *MANT'S EDITION OF THE COMMON PRAYER*.

Examples of the rigorous, close, yet simple and unconstrained translation of several of the collects will be found in *BLUNT'S HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND*.

*Ministers*, for the fitness of; St. Matthias' day. That they may be diligent; St. Peter's day. That their Labour may be Successful; 3rd Advent.

*Mortification*, for; Circumcision, and Easter Eve.

*Obedience*, that we may obey and follow the Doctrines of the Apostles; Conversion of St. Paul, St. John Baptist. See Good Works.

*Prayers*, for the acceptance of our; 10th Trin.

*Providence*, for protection by God's providence, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 20th Trin.

*Purity*, for purity of Heart; the Purification.

*Renovation*, for; Christmas day.

*Religion*, that we may be truly religious; 7th Trin.

*Saints*, for the imitation of; Innocents' day, St. Stephen, St. Philip, St. James, St. John Baptist, and All Saints.

*Scripture*, before reading the Scripture; 2nd Advent.

*Sin*, for conversion from; 1st Advent, 1st after Easter, St. Andrew, St. James, and St. Matthew.

*For Pardon of Sin*; 12th, 21st, 24th Trin.

*Sincerity*, for; 3rd Easter.

*Holy Spirit*, for the direction of; 19th Trin., 5th Easter.

*Temptations*, for deliverance from, and support under; 4th Epiph.; 2nd Lent.

*Thoughts*, against Evil; 5th Easter.

*Unbelievers*, for; 3rd for Good Friday.

*Good Works*, for fruitfulness in; 5th Easter, 1st, 9th, 11th, 13th, 17th, 25th Trin.

The second collect at morning prayer is entitled the **COLLECT FOR PEACE**. Peace is used in Scripture for all earthly blessings, because it is the mother and nurse of them all; it is the most comprehensive benefit on earth and the type of heaven; and to encourage us to pray for it, God is here represented as the "Author of peace," Isai. xlvi. 7, and the "lover of concord," Ps. cxxxiii. 1. Peace was our Lord's legacy—"My peace I leave with you." He prayed for peace, paid for peace, wept for it, and bled for it. Peace should therefore be dear to us; all kinds of peace, outward peace and all; for if there be not a quiet life, there will hardly be godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 2. In

addressing God as the lover of concord, we have a motive and a direction suggested to do *our part* in endeavouring to obtain what we ask. When we pray for peace, we ought to be ourselves under the influence of charity, and take care that it, at least, be not our fault if we fail in securing it. It is not likely, if we endeavour to promote that concord which God loves, that we shall generally fail to be at peace. But, as from the wickedness or infirmity of others, our benevolent efforts may be defeated in this life, we are reminded, that we shall not *finally* fail in our object; for we remember, that in the knowledge of God standeth our *eternal life*, and that his service is *perfect freedom*: a noble freedom indeed, to have the soul released from the insupportable slavery of ignorance and vice, and set at liberty to range in the spacious and delicious plains of wisdom and virtue; to have it delivered from the harsh and turbulent tyranny of insulting passions, and established under the gentle and delightful government of right reason. O my good God, grant my soul this happy freedom, and set my heart at liberty, that I may cheerfully run the way of thy blessed commandments, and suffer no impediment to obstruct my course\*!

\* "I have sometimes considered in what a troublesome case is that chamberlain in an inn, who being but one, is to give attendance on many guests. For, suppose them all in one chamber, and yet if one will command him to come to the window, and the other to the table, and another to the bed, and another to the chimney, and another to come up stairs, and another to go down stairs, and all in the same instant, how would he be distracted to please them all! Yet, such is the sad condition of my soul by nature; not only a servant, but a slave to sin. Pride calls me to the window, gluttony to the table, wantonness and laziness to the bed, ambition commands me to go up stairs, and covetousness to come down. Vices, I see, are all contrary to themselves as to virtue. Free me, Lord, from this distracted case; fetch me from being sin's servant to be thine, *whose service is perfect freedom*; for Thou art but one and ever the same, and always enjoinest commands agreeable to themselves—thy glory and my good."—*FULLER's Contemplations.*

The second collect is connected with that FOR GRACE which follows; the former being a petition for temporal blessings, such as are needful for the body; the latter for spiritual, such as are necessary for the soul; in the former we pray for freedom from the evil of punishment, in the latter, from freedom from the evil of sin. In the latter we pray for grace to live well; for if there be not peace with God by a holy life, there will never be peace in the world.

Both these collects are connected with the PRAYERS FOR THE KING AND ROYAL FAMILY, FOR THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE. Peace is the great and summary blessing to us as men, the subjects of civil government; and grace is the same to us as Christians, the members of a spiritual society, that is, the Church. Now because the former is conveyed to us by the wise government of our temporal rulers, there follows a prayer for the king; and because the latter is derived to us by the administration of our spiritual governors, there follows a prayer for the bishops and clergy, and the charge committed to them.

We pray for the king, not only because it is authorized by Scripture, and sanctioned by the ancient practice of Christians, but also from the reason of the thing. St. Paul shows (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2,) that to do so is our own interest, as well as the prince's; for we pray that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives under them, in all godliness and honesty, and in their peace we shall have peace also; besides the duties of the royal station being very important and difficult, and the hazards of erring and sinning in it many and great, the sovereign has consequently much need of our prayers. The whole prayer itself is happily adapted to that spirit of loyalty which our Church on all occasions recommends; and no person void of that spirit can join in it without gross hypocrisy. The

language is remarkably noble and sublime; the introductory part grand and solemn; and the several petitions which follow are extremely pertinent and proper. May God give us all grace to use it with sincerity and devotion, and to show in the whole course of our lives and conversations that loyalty, which is one distinguishing mark of the disciples of Christ.

*Wealth* does not mean riches or money, but prosperity or welfare, which latter was its common meaning when the liturgy was compiled. We use the word *weal* now in the same sense. Public weal means public welfare; “In health and wealth,” is the same as in health and prosperity. In the litany there is a passage which clearly shows that this was the sense intended: “In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our *wealth*,” when the contrast is between tribulation, that is, adversity, and wealth, that is, prosperity,—in adversity and prosperity deliver us.

The expression that our sovereign should vanquish and overcome all his enemies, is one among similar passages in our liturgy which has been misrepresented as recommending aggrandizement and conquest. On Christian principles the Church must presuppose that Christian princes will engage in no wars which are not undertaken in just and necessary defence. She knows that all war, excepting in cases of unjust aggression, is equally repugnant to the letter and spirit of the Christian religion. In her offices day by day she prays for peace. In her litany, or general supplication, thrice a week she deprecates war, and from battle and murder entreats deliverance. Whenever she prays for a blessing on the arms of the sovereign, and for victory over all his enemies, she must be understood to pray for the ends of victory; the preservation of the lawful and just rights of the

sovereign and of these realms, deliverance from the power of enemies, and the restoration of quietness and peace.

The royal family are the future hopes of the public, and in the mean time their whole behaviour is of very great consequence to it: we apply therefore, to the "Fountain of all goodness," who is thus able to supply the branches, as well as the root, for such blessings on every branch, especially the principal by name, as their condition requires; and we should not only pray for them, but pay a suitable regard to them; not listening to every idle and scandalous report which malice may propagate against them; and to think and speak of them with affection and respect, and admire and applaud their virtues, and to conceal, rather than publish their failings.

We pray for bishops and clergy and their charge, because nothing tends more effectually to promote God's glory, and the promotion of true religion in the world, than that the Church should be governed by wise and pious rulers, and conducted by zealous and holy ministers, and his house filled with humble, teachable, and godly people; and when we consider the awful responsibility which devolves on those who watch for souls, and must give an account; when we reflect on their peculiar trials and difficulties, the anxiety which they must feel, not only for the souls committed to their charge, but for their own souls also, "lest after having preached to others, they themselves should be cast away;" when we call to mind the vast concerns which in a measure depend on them,—surely we must feel the duty of praying for our ministers, and greater blessings we cannot ask for them than is implored in this prayer; and if those persons who are loudest in their just complaints of the inconsistencies of some few clergymen, if they

who see these things and lament them, would give themselves to earnest prayer in behalf of their clergy, they might soon expect that every individual of our order, would faithfully preach Christ, and live according to godliness\*.

By "curates" are meant not merely stipendiaries who assist the incumbent, as now the word is used to denote, but all those of the two other apostolic orders of clergy, priests and deacons, to whom the bishops, the chief pastors under Christ, have committed the cure or care of souls of some part of their flock. The bishops with these curates, and the flock or congregation committed to their charge, make up a Church.

This last statement agrees with Scripture and the opinions of the first Christians. According to our Saviour's definition, a Church is "a shepherd and his sheep that will hear his voice," to which St. Cyprian's description agrees: "The Church is a congregation of believers united to their bishop, and a flock adhering to their shepherd; whence you ought to know," says he, "that the Church is in the bishop, and the bishop in the Church, and they that are not with the bishop, are not in the Church." Now because the bishops are the guides and governors of the Church, so that all acts of the Church are ordered and directed by them, and seeing how much so high an office requires an extraordinary measure of Divine grace, we should remember them in our prayers, but especially and with peculiar affection the bishop under whom we severally live. It was indeed customary in the ancient Church to mention in the public prayers their bishop by name as well as their king.

It was stated before, that the Church usually addresses God by some attribute appropriate to the requests about to be made, and we here call on Him as

\* CLOSE'S SERMONS.

the Being “ who doest great marvels,” because He hath marvellously gathered his Church from among infidels and heathens; He hath marvellously protected her against the malice of Satan, the rage of persecution, and the blind zeal of schism,—like the bush in Horeb, burning she has not been consumed; He endued the apostles with marvellous and miraculous gifts on the day of Pentecost, and by their means many others; and He has and ever will produce marvellous effects on the hearts of believers by the ministry of his word and sacraments, and He only can do such things.

There is a peculiar propriety in petitioning God for the healthful Spirit of his grace. The influences of the Holy Spirit are in a greater or less degree necessary to be experienced by every individual that would be a Christian indeed; more especially so by those who are appointed to teach the way of salvation to others. For that he that teacheth and he that learneth must be assisted by the same Master: they must be renewed by the same grace, and derive their spiritual health from the same sources; and this we acknowledge when we pray that God would send down upon his ministers and their congregation the “healthful,” that is, in Scripture idiom, the “holiness-bringing” Spirit of his grace. We conclude this prayer, “For the honour of Jesus Christ, our Advocate and Mediator,” because neither minister nor people must ask for the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit with a view to advance their own glory and importance in the Church. The honour of our Advocate and Mediator must be the grand end of our petitions. Let him have all the honour of all the good we have ever received, and all the hope, and joy, and comfort we have ever experienced. An advocate is one who pleads the cause of another in a court of

justice; therefore Jesus Christ is called our Advocate, because he pleads our cause with our heavenly Father whom we have offended, and causes our pardon to be sealed, and our persons, accused by our sins, to be acquitted by him. He is also our Mediator, that is, the person who transacts the great affair of our reconciliation between God and his creatures. He intercedes for us, and is continually offering up his own merits for our sakes; to rescue and screen us by his all-perfect righteousness from that damnation to which we otherwise must have been eternally liable.

The prayer which follows is called A PRAYER OF ST. CHYRSOSTOM, from its having been taken out of a Greek liturgy ascribed to him. It was adopted by the Reformers, not knowing where to find a prayer, or persons to compose a prayer better adapted to the conclusion of the service. It first thankfully confesses the great goodness of our blessed Redeemer in disposing our minds, of themselves so variously and wrongly inclined, to ask unanimously of Him such things as we ought, and encouraging our applications by such explicit assurances of hearing us. Then it submits entirely to his wisdom in what manner, and how far He will think it for our good to grant us any of our particular requests, begging nothing absolutely but what He hath absolutely engaged to our prayers and endeavours; namely, that practical knowledge here of his truth, his doctrines and precepts, his promises and threatenings, that we may obtain the everlasting blissful enjoyment of his presence hereafter, being fully assured that if these two points be secured, everything else is of comparatively little value.

It is remarkable in the structure of the prayer, that it is not like the greater part of the prayers, addressed to the Father, in the name and mediation of his Son, but immediately to the Son, as appears

plainly from the promise referred to in the introductory part, which our Saviour made in his own person, whilst he dwelt on earth ; and also from the omission of the usual words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," at the end. Not that when we address ourselves to one person only in the blessed Trinity, we are to exclude the others from our thoughts, since they are one undivided nature or substance, the joint objects of our faith and worship. Accordingly it is justly remarked in the Nicene creed, that "the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified," and in the Athanasian, that "in all things the Trinity and Unity are to be worshipped." The gracious promise of Christ alluded to is found in Matt. xviii. 19, 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them ;" that is, he will give them assurance of his presence, that he will grant their requests, I John v. 15. Perhaps we are but few at common prayer ; but since we come as his disciples, in obedience to his precepts, to ask in his name alone, we are sure that God is among us and hears our prayers ; and then such is his love to us, and power with God, that we doubt not to obtain them : and oh ! whom would it not move, to lay aside all needless impediments, and come to prayers, when we are sure to meet the Lord Jesus there !

It was customary in both the Jewish and Christian Churches to dismiss the people from religious assemblies with a blessing. It was pronounced by the priest, and received by the people on their knees ; nor ought any one to go out before it was given. The Jews had a form of God's making, and ours is indited by the Spirit, and is the same with which St. Paul used to close his epistles. This latter form was delivered to the Christian Church to be used instead

of the Jewish form, owing to the new revelation made of the three persons in the Godhead, for otherwise the Jews both blessed and worshipped in the name of the same God as the Christians, only their devotions had respect chiefly to the Unity of the Godhead, with only an allusion to the three persons, whereas ours comprehends them expressly.

The form as used by us is not strictly a benediction. By the term "you" being altered into "us," it becomes rather an intercessionary prayer, the minister kneels while he utters it, and the congregation speak it mentally to God, to whom it is addressed. The minister implores in it for himself as well as the people, the grace and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship, that this the communication of the needful warnings and assistances of the Holy Ghost, the same mighty blessings which the apostle begged for his converts and for himself; blessings which the Church must ever crave, *without* which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before God, and *with* which, we cannot die eternally. May we ever cordially unite in this full, encouraging, and truly Christian petition!

From the preceding imperfect view of the several parts and offices of the morning or first service, the reflection may justly suggest itself, that they appear so rational in themselves, so exact in their proportions, and so apt in their connexions, that we may venture to affirm, that thus far our venerable Church doth "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." 1 Chron. xvi. 29.

#### THE ORDER FOR EVENING PRAYER.

THE HYMN READ AFTER THE FIRST LESSON AT EVENING PRAYER is the first recorded in the New Testament, and may be reckoned the first-fruits of the Spirit; it

is the grateful song of the blessed virgin on the confirmation which she received at Elizabeth's house of what the angel had told her, that she should become the mother of our Lord by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It is fitly placed after the first lesson, since the latter usually sets forth those acts of God's gracious providence over the pious, and those prophecies and promises of a Saviour to come, for which this hymn doth praise the Lord; and when we hear in the lesson of like examples of his mercy, and are told of those prophecies and promises which are now fulfilled in Christ's birth, we may be expected to rejoice with the virgin in the same words.

I shall explain the following terms in it.

*Lowliness* means, not humility or lowness of spirit, of which, though an eminent example, the virgin was too humble to ascribe to herself, but the low estate, the meanness and obscurity of her condition.

*The hungry*; they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, Matt. vi.

*The rich*; they that rely on the vain and false treasures of their own wisdom and vanity.

Our Reformed Church differs from that of Rome with regard to the mother of our Lord. We "call her blessed," we celebrate her memory, the fruit of whose womb was the Author of eternal salvation, we admire her as a pattern of true meekness, and piety, and purity of manners; but further than this we dare not go. In the Church of Rome\* they except her from the universal corruption of human nature; they invoke her as the queen of heaven; they pray to her and worship her as one having divine power; which is the height of profaneness and impiety, a direct breach of the "first and great commandment." How must her meek and

\* Council of Trent, chap. 5, decree of 5th session.

humble spirit have been offended and shocked, could she have foreseen their idolatrous adoration, who place her on an equality with the blessed Lord of heaven and earth ; nay, in some sense, make her superior to the Saviour, by beseeching her to command her Son “ to grant their requests ! ”

There is a resemblance between the virgin’s song of praise and the psalm sometimes used in its stead ; a part of it is indeed taken from this psalm, which latter seems more appropriate when the lesson treats of some great and eminent deliverance of God’s people.

THE HYMN USED AFTER THE SECOND LESSON at evening prayer is the expression of gratitude of good old Simeon, when he met Christ in the temple, whereby God fulfilled his promise to him, that he should not die till he had seen the Messiah, and it comes properly after the lesson which is always taken out of the New Testament, wherein is contained and delivered to us that Gospel, the enjoyment and participation of which is the ground and foundation of the whole hymn. The fitness of it for our use is further evident, for in it the Holy Ghost seems to intimate (whether the speaker of it perceived the design or not) that, contrary to the expected and natural order of things, Christ should *first* be a light to lighten the Gentiles, then, afterwards, the glory of God’s people Israel. We should besides remember, that we also, as well as Simeon, “ have seen the Lord’s salvation ; ” for though we have not yet beheld our Saviour with our bodily eyes, to that of faith he is exhibited continually in the Gospel history and sacraments ; we may meet him in his Church, we may converse with him in our private meditations, and this we should think happiness enough for us here, whatever else we want or suffer ; and be always prepared and always willing to “ bless God, and depart in peace.”

The 67th Psalm is sometimes used instead of this hymn, being the parallel to Simeon's hymn, inasmuch as it is a prophetic prayer for God's saving health, that is, the means by which he heals and saves souls. Both praised God for the foresight they had that it would be made known to us. Being a prayer to God, it must not be barely repeated, but addressed to our Maker in the most solemn manner.

THE SECOND COLLECT at evening prayer is upon the same subject as that for the morning's, peace; a blessing we cannot ask too often; and since there are two kinds of peace, inward and outward, in the morning, we beg for outward peace to secure us from the trouble of the world, in which the business of the day engageth us, and inward peace in the evening, to comfort and quiet our minds when we take our rest.

THE THIRD COLLECT at evening service is a petition for the same blessing as in the third collect for the morning, with this difference, that the one for the morning was for grace to protect us from the evils into which we might run during the active pursuits and thoughts of the day; whereas the other is for protection from the dangers of the night, which might assault us when we lie unconscious of what is passing around us, and with becoming confidence then we commend ourselves to Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and with whom darkness and light are both alike, Psalms cxxi. 3, cxxxix. 12. "Lighten our darkness" is a phrase used in the Psalms, (cxii. 4, and xviii. 28,) signifying God's knowledge and protection.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS.

“THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, COMMONLY CALLED THE CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS,” is appointed to be read on several particular days mentioned in the rubric; on some, because the matter of them much concerns the manifestations of the Trinity; as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter-day, Ascension-day, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, and St. John’s day, at the highest of whose acts, the baptizing of our Lord, was made a kind of sensible manifestation of the Trinity; partly that it might be said once a month at least, and therefore on St. James’ and St. Bartholomew’s days; and withal at a convenient distance from each other, and therefore on St. Matthew’s, St. Matthias’, Simon and Jude’s, and St. Andrew’s.

It is commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius from the following circumstance. About A.D. 300, Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, in Egypt, being an ambitious proud man, gave himself up to a discontented spirit, grew impatient of authority, and unwilling to submit to the teaching of the Church. He denied that the Son was God as well as man, and co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. The publishing of this opinion raised such a commotion, that Constantine, the Roman emperor, held a council at Nice, in Bithynia, A.D. 325, where Arius’ doctrines were condemned, and the Nicene creed framed. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, was the chief maintainer of the Catholic doctrine, in opposition to Arius; and since the creed which we are now considering is a summary of his writings on the subject, as also from his unshaken constancy during many reverses,

it has been ascribed to him, though it is not his composition. It was framed most probably by Hilary, a bishop of France, in the year 450, to furnish the Church with a plain and minute account of the grand doctrines of the ever blessed Trinity, and the incarnation of Christ; and as a condemnation of the heresies which had been industriously propagated by the enemies of the true faith.

The prospective wisdom of the Reformers in adopting this creed and inserting it in our liturgy seems manifest, the tenets of many of these ancient sects having been revived and maintained under other names up to the present day. The existing state of many religious communities, both in this country and elsewhere, prove how easily errors creep in and the stream of divine truth becomes defiled, and may teach us in how few years it may come to pass that strange doctrines will be preached in places of worship built and endowed by persons, who themselves held the truth in purity, unless some check be placed upon the extravagance of men's opinions, and unless some standard be applied by which to measure the confession of their faith. The Scriptures, indeed, are the only ultimate rule of faith; but then, as all in turn appeal to this authority, it is absolutely essential, unless men's minds are for ever to be tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, that the Church herself, in her collective capacity, should put forth for the use of her children, some forms of sound words, declarations of her exposition of Scripture, and containing her articles of faith. This our Church does, as in her other formularies, so especially in these her creeds: by the help of these, under God's blessing, she adheres to the truth, she for ever speaks the language of the Church universal; and while new and strange doctrines multiply around her, whilst error

may insinuate itself into this or that community, she, like her great Author, continues the same, "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." She partakes not of these lamentable mutations; it is her glory and her aim to "ask for the good old paths," and in them to walk.

We repeat this creed in the same manner as the Psalms, for in the ancient English offices, it was designated the Psalm "Quicunque," and sung like them; and it seems a truer view of this venerable composition to consider it as a psalm or hymn of concurrence in God's appointment, as Psalms cxviii. or cxxxix, or the Te Deum, than as a formal creed.

On considering the three different periods at which the three creeds were framed, a familiar illustration of the care of the Church suggests itself. She seems to have acted like a tender mother, very anxious for her children from the very first, but growing more and more anxious as they grow older, are more exposed to dangers, and yet less and less willing to yield themselves to her control. Thus it may seem that in the most ancient, the apostles' creed, a plain simple rule of faith is given. In the next, the Nicene creed, after an interval of 200 years, the *same rule* is laid down, but more at length, and in a tone of anxiety and caution, as if the enemy were at hand. But in the last, the Athanasian, after more than another century, where still the *very same rule of faith is laid down*, the alarm is loudly sounded; there is throughout an expression of urgent warning, as needful for persons in the very midst of foes, some open, and more, secret foes, who would rob God of his honour, and man of the everlasting inheritance purchased for him by his Saviour's blood.

It contains a few words and phrases not found in Scripture, which however are agreeable to the sense and doctrine of Scripture, and were rendered neces-

sary by the new modes of expression first invented by those false teachers, whose tenets it was intended to condemn ; and therefore the distinctions and explanations are not the fault of the creed, but of those who attempted to corrupt the hearts of the simple with their *false* distinctions and *false* explanations. It is not the intention of the Church in this creed, or anywhere else, to explain what is above human comprehension ; but only to warn us, that quibbled and pretended distinctions have been made of old, and will be again made against the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and that, come in whatever shape they may, they are to be opposed with a sharp and strong denial.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as proposed in this creed, has met with general consent. It is not only the doctrine of the Gospel, but the doctrine of the primitive Church, the doctrine of almost everything that can be called a Church in all ages. In the Greek and Roman Church it survived amid all the corruptions that arose ; upon the Reformation, there was not a Protestant Church but received it in its fullest extent ; *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, and all the wisest and best reformers, acknowledged it, and made it their profession of faith : by the former it was styled the *bulwark* of the apostles' creed ; the Puritans in our own country, the parent stock of all our modern dissenters, embraced it as readily as our Church herself. If therefore any one has doubts on this important subject, let him first search the Scriptures, and settle his principles from thence : if he afterwards wishes to pursue his researches, let him not recur to the crude and hasty publications of the present day, in which assertions are made without foundation in Scripture, antiquity, or the principles of any Church ; but to those learned writers, who arranged this controversy

in our own country ; or if he has learning and leisure sufficient, in the primitive fathers themselves.

The damnatory clauses are levelled against those who reject the great doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation, from presumptuous self-opinion, or wilful negligence, "choosing darkness rather than light," and do not afterwards repent of these faults ; particularly if they are made sensible of them, and if not, in general, amongst their known sins.

They are not uncharitable ; for our meek and gracious Lord, who died to save us, used expressions as strong and unqualified as any in this creed : "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. *It is charity itself which enjoins their use*, both to alarm men into examining their hearts, and looking to the soundness of their faith,—to apprise them, that as the very end of their belief, the salvation of their souls, can be obtained only by the means which that religion prescribes, a faith in its genuine doctrines is as indispensable as obedience to its precepts ; it is charity to the offenders themselves, as well as to those who may not yet have gone astray, but are in danger of being misled by their example : and many may yet bless God for those very warnings which now seem so intolerable. God forbid that so excellent a grace, one so really tender of souls, and jealous of God's honour, should ever be exchanged away for that spurious and pestilential substitute, which so often usurps the place of real charity ; and which, under pretence of being careful of the feelings of a dying sinner, will see him trembling on the brink of a miserable eternity, without warning him of his awful condition\* !

\* "The sacrifice of principle by the adoption of an accommodating system, from a desire of not giving offence, (which by a *mismother*, characteristic of the present age, is called *liberality*,) certainly bears no affinity to that Christian charity to which it pretends. For Christian charity has for its primary object the

The word Trinity itself is not found in Scripture ; but it is the doctrine, not the word, we contend for, and if three divine persons or agents are mentioned, as they are, throughout the Bible, at the same time we are told there is but one God, we cannot, I think, express this doctrine more properly than by the words Trinity in Unity.

Respecting the word Person, it might be sufficient to say, that it is a word which best sets forth the sense of Scripture, so as not to confound the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost with each other, but to keep up the distinction between them, without dividing the substance. But in reality we have the authority of Scripture for using this very term in speaking of the distinction between the sacred three, Heb. i. 3 ; 2 Cor. ii. 10 ; 2 Cor. iv. 6. Thus both the Greek words signifying a person, are in the New Testament applied to the Son of God, as distinct from the Father ; and the Church has, therefore, scriptural authority for using the expression, and speaking of the error of “ confounding the persons.”

It has been asserted against this creed, that it makes no allowance for unavoidable ignorance ; and yet how any really conscientious, unprejudiced persons could make the objection, is inconceivable. For, as

salvation of souls ; which is not to be effected by humouring men in their error, but by making them see it ; and with this view writing them up to the truth, instead of writing the truth *down* to them ; and the great excellence of Christian charity consists in its making a proper discrimination between the sinner and the sin, condemning unequivocally *the one*, while it is desirous at the same time of sparing and even doing all manner of good to *the other*, after the example of our truly charitable Saviour, who, though he severely rebuked his disciples for their desire to call down fire on a village of Samaria as a punishment for their refusal to receive him, yet when he had occasion to speak of the religion of its inhabitants, he did not admit that they were within the pale of the true Church, by decidedly declaring that ‘they knew not what they worshipped,’ and that ‘salvation was of the Jews.’ ”—  
DAUBENNEY.

in Scripture, so in the liturgy, we are always instructed to believe that a merciful God will make allowance for weakness and blindness in matters of knowledge and faith, as well as in other things. It is, too, always taught in the liturgy, as well as in Scripture, that upon true repentance, sincere faith in the blood and mediation of our Redeemer, and entire submission to the guidance of the divine Sanctifier, the door of mercy is open to even the most inveterate sinner. The Church, then, with this doctrine *implied in all her services*, cannot be called uncharitable, if she follows in this creed the general rule adopted by her Lord in giving this rule. What merciful abatements he may think proper to make in his judgment, must rest with himself. The Church must teach her children to do their duty, and seek salvation in the plain and direct way that Jesus has pointed out; and not devise schemes and exceptions, to seek it by a system which is to be built on supposing what, under *particular circumstances* (not applicable to those who use this creed), God may do. Her creed is to be repeated by those who are *not unavoidably ignorant*; and their business is to work out their own salvation by the rule of that word which they do know, instead of troubling themselves with questions respecting *allowances* to be made for those who *do not know* the truth. Her language is like that of her Master when asked a vain and useless question, John xxi. 22; *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.—He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* The true reason of this creed being obnoxious, is that it is the bulwark of the truth against innovation, being so strictly worded as to keep out of the Church men of semi-socinian and latitudinarian principles. See *History of the Liturgy.*

Though this creed does not differ from the other

creeds in substance, yet it does in *form*; other creeds teach, assert, and acknowledge the genuine doctrines of Christianity, without using arguments, but leaving men to the perusal of their Bibles, for the evidence of these truths, and undertaking no more than to recapitulate a summary of the principal contents of it; but this goes on in the argumentative method to show, why we ought not in our exposition of belief of this article, either to "confound the persons or to divide the substance." The heresies of Arius, Ebion, Cerinthus, Macedonius, Nestorius, and the rest which are condemned in it, may be traced to one common and uniform origin, namely, the presumptuous attempt to be wise above what is written, and a disinclination to submit the proud intellect of man to the obedience of faith. They demanded satisfaction upon points that were not the objects of reason, but of faith; and when no satisfactory answer could be given them, they levelled Scripture to their reason, instead of building their faith on Scripture.

The doctrine of the Trinity, however, is not contradictory to reason. What is asserted in it is, that there are in the One essential Godhead, Three, distinguished in a certain manner from each other. These distinctions are called in Scripture, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But we *do not* maintain that they are *three in the same respect in which they are one*. This would be, indeed, an absurd contradiction. We believe that God is most emphatically *One*, as regards the essential qualities of his nature; yet in some respects *Three*, that is, with reference to the divine acts and offices; and though we understand that the Father is first in order, as unoriginate, that is, derived from none; the Son second, as begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost third, as proceeding from both; though we confess the Father is supreme in office, and that

the Son and Holy Ghost condescend to inferior offices ; still in duration, dignity, and other attributes peculiar to the Deity, they are co-equal. And in this there is nothing repugnant to sound reason and common sense, or to the ordinary perceptions and language of mankind. It is true that it transcends our understanding perfectly to comprehend this ; but it has been revealed, *not that we might be able to understand it*, but that upon the infallible authority of God Himself, we might believe it ; and so, through the exalting discipline of that faith, “grow in grace” towards Christian perfection.

Much stress is laid upon our belief in the Trinity, because this doctrine is connected with every article of our religion, whether more or less speculative or practical. The acknowledgment or rejection of it alters the very notion of our justification and salvation, and either represents it as a mystery of mercy in the conjunction of infinite justice, undeviating righteousness, and unlimited goodness, or as the easy grant of a tender Being, who has more regard to the happiness than the holiness of His creatures. This sublime truth is not, as too many regard it, a barren speculative notion, but a living and practical doctrine. The peculiar worth of Revelation, the especial promises connected with it, and the powerful motives supplied by it, all belong to *that* religion, and to that alone, which has the Trinity for the foundation of its creed. So far as we can conceive, there could have been no atonement, no return to God on the part of sinners, no condescending approach to sinners on the part of God, no assisting grace, no justification, and consequently, *no salvation*, but for the existence of the three persons, as they are most imperfectly termed, in the essential unity of Jehovah. We must believe in the Divine nature of all the Persons, before we can truly love THE FATHER, as the original Author of eternal life ; receive and obey THE

Son, with humility, patience, and charity, such as he himself displayed while on earth, for our example ; or yield to the impulses of THE SPIRIT who dwells within us. The Father is the final object to which religion directs the soul—the primal source of truth, of goodness, and of happiness ; but towards that object we cannot tend—from that source we cannot draw the freely-given water of life, save through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost. The Son is “the Way ;” the Holy Ghost is the moving principle which excites and impels the reluctant will of man to seek the Father through the Son\*.

The word “Incomprehensible,” in the original Latin is “immensus,” that is, not comprehended within any limits ; which was the signification of the English word incomprehensible at the time this creed was translated, rather than that which it implies at present.

There is a simile or comparison in this creed, which may give us some faint idea, however inadequate, of the mysterious union of the two natures in our Saviour ; two such contrary substances as spirit and matter being intimately joined together in man, never to be separated till death, and to be re-united at the general resurrection. This is to our imperfect faculties unaccountable ; and yet there is nothing impossible or contradictory about it—nothing but what the most learned as well as the most illiterate firmly believe ; and if we thus assent to an undoubted truth, relating to our own nature, though we cannot fully comprehend or explain it, we ought not to dispute against what the word of God reveals to us concerning the divine nature, and its union with ours, however it may exceed our capacities to understand it. We should

\* From a Sermon by Rev. Richard Cattermole, of Christ’s College, Cambridge.

rather admire and adore "the wisdom of God in a mystery; even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory," and to accomplish our salvation, 1 Cor. ii. 7.

The term "saved," in its primary signification and common use, means a preservation from threatening evils or punishments; but in the New Testament, it includes much more. It means the whole Christian scheme of redemption and justification by the Son of God, with all the glorious privileges and promises contained in that scheme. It means not merely a deliverance from danger, or from vengeance, but a federal right to positive happiness, purchased by the merits, and declared to mankind by the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord. St. Paul calls it "the obtaining of the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory," 2 Tim. ii. 10. "Whosoever then will be saved," desires to secure the glorious promises of the Gospel, must pursue it on the terms which the Gospel proposes; and particularly must embrace the doctrines which it reveals. "Above all things," in the first place, as the foundation on which he must build a holy practice, and a covenanted title to pardon for past deviations from it, it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, "which was once delivered to the Saints," and is to be delivered unto them unto the end of the world.

This summary of the Christian faith is extremely valuable on many accounts. As an explicit and correct profession of the fundamental doctrines of our religion, it manifests to the whole Christian world, the extent and unity of that faith, which, existing from the commencement of the Gospel, has, for the space of thirteen centuries, been secured by the same form of words through the Latin or Western Churches of Christendom. The clergy likewise are fully in-

structed in the doctrines which they engage to teach, and forewarned more in detail of the heresies they are bound to oppose ; and, by the stated repetitions of it, are reminded of the strict obligations which they have taken upon themselves; of the fraud which they practise, so long as they receive the emoluments of a function, whilst they refuse to discharge the duties attached to it ; and of the guilt which they contract before God, when by neglect or opposition to these doctrines, they discountenance articles of faith, which they voluntarily and publicly have engaged to promote.

It may be asked, Is a clergyman blameable, however, if he omits reading it, and in order to comply with the scruples, or avoid giving offence to weak brethren ? and, undoubtedly, a tender regard for persons of weak minds and scrupulous consciences is not only allowable, but praiseworthy,—in all matters of *indifference* we cannot be too complying and indulgent, see Rom. xiv. 21 ; but when an essential article of faith is concerned, no concession must be made to gratify the doubtful or unbelieving. Even silence in this case is criminal ; for not to confess, is tacitly to deny it. And let a clergyman consider how offensive the omission of this creed must be to the orthodox part of the congregation, who are thereby deprived of an opportunity of professing their faith publicly in the manner the Church has directed ; and whether is it more reasonable to offend these by an irregular omission, or to disgust the heterodox by reading what they are commanded ? Rather does it become a minister to explain its design and uses to the unlearned, as well as to obviate the crude exceptions made against its doctrines or language ; to derive its due weight of authority from the venerable antiquity of its origin ; and to draw an argument of its merits from the universal approbation with which it has been received,

and the place which it held in the confession, if not in the liturgy of every Church in Europe, Papal or Reformed. Indeed it has for so long a succession of ages borne a share in the just interpretation and support of our Christian faith, that it may well be doubted how far without it this faith, in its present purity, could be maintained ; and this they have well judged, who at different times have proposed to us to part with it, merely to gain in return the applause of a concession, an inducement too usually proffered in contempt, and paid without sincerity. Concessions in matters of less importance have too generally a doubtful effect ; but who would be responsible for a concession of such high concern ? Seeing that this creed is an important fence to the faith of that holy Church which Christ hath purchased with his blood, who would not tremble at the proposal of laying waste a fence, which, in any degree, hath afforded protection to what was obtained for us at so inestimable a price ; and of inviting, by a voluntary surrender of our present security, renewed instances of insult in repeated and incessant attacks, to be made on the terms and obligations of our Christian covenant ? So long as there shall be men left to oppose the doctrines this creed contains, so long will it be necessary to continue the use of it, to preserve the rest of mankind ; and when none remain to find fault with the doctrines, there will be none to object against the use of this creed, or wish to have it laid aside.

It may be remarked respecting the mode in which it is printed in the liturgy, that “ the *damnatory clauses* not being parts of the creed, so much as denunciations of the Church, might, perhaps, (to mark the distinction of the parts) be presented to the eye of the reader in a different type from the rest \*.”

\* Archbishop Magee.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE LITANY: WITH INTERVENING CONSIDERATIONS ON SCHISM.

The word LITANY was used in the Christian Church in the sense in which ancient Greek writers understood it, namely, a supplication and common intercession to God, when his wrath lieth hard upon us. Such is David's litany, Psalm li. ; the litany of God's appointing, Josh. ii. 7 ; the litany of our Saviour, Luke xxii. 44, alluded to in Heb. v. 7, and the deprecations and earnest supplications which St. Paul enjoins to be used, 1 Tim. ii. 1. It is thought that the earnestness of supplication is best excited and expressed by the custom of the people interposing frequently to repeat with their own mouths the solemn form of beseeching God to "deliver" and to "hear them," which form has been used in the Church 1400 years. The litany is not the composition of our Reformers. The substance is taken by them from Gregory, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 590, who formed a litany for that Church from a careful collation of all such devotions previously in use. It used to be repeated in processions of the priest and the people.

It is appointed for Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. For Sundays, because then is the largest congregation and most solemn worship; for Wednesdays and Fridays, being the days whereon our Saviour was betrayed and crucified, and consequently appropriated in the primitive Church to penitence and humiliation.

The posture in which it should be repeated, is not prescribed, except that being now a part of the morn-

ing service for the days above mentioned, it is included in the rubric at the end of the suffrages, after the second Lord's prayer, which orders "all to kneel" in that place, after which, there is no direction for "standing." This agrees with the injunctions of King Edward and Queen Elizabeth. The people consequently kneel also, as whenever the priest kneels, they are to do the same; and it seems fit that the litany, being the most fervent address to God, should be made in the lowest posture of supplication.

The litany consists of the following parts. The Invocation, the Deprecations, the Intercessions, and Supplications at the conclusion.

The Invocation is addressed to every Person of the Godhead separately, and then to all the three conjointly. By the separate invocation, we acknowledge "every Person by himself to be God and Lord;" and by the joint invocation, we acknowledge that there "are not three Gods, or three Lords:" so that herein is contained a creed, or profession of faith, and not only so, but also a confession of sin and entreaty for mercy. The invocation is urged by two motives; we are "sinners" by breaking God's laws, and we are "miserable sinners" by incurring all the punishment due to the breach of them.

We supplicate each person separately, because we have offended them in respect of their several offices. We are sinners *against the Father*, by forgetting his works, not glorifying Him as our Creator and Preserver, nor regarding the operations of his hand: *against the Son*, by neglecting or refusing the tenders of salvation made by him, by not closing so heartily as we should with the proffered terms of reconciliation and peace, by slighting his holy ordinances, rejecting his word, neglecting his sacraments, not duly repenting at his call, nor believing his promises, nor giving heed

to the precepts of his Gospel, nor being thankful for his death, nor being mindful of his example, nor anxious for the welfare of those souls which he bought so dear : *against the Holy Ghost*, by quenching his good motions, by resisting his calls, by neglecting his gifts, contemning his graces, not profiting by those ordinances which are the means he uses to convert, confirm, and comfort us, and by cherishing evil thoughts and pursuing wicked purposes, in spite of the efforts which he uses for our sanctification. We then worship them conjointly, our Church following in this instance the ancient practice of the Catholic Church, and with good reason for doing the same ; for every sin which we commit against one Person in the Trinity, is committed against the rest : and the mercy and pardon which we desire, and the misery from which we expect to be relieved, comes not from any single Person, but from the joint and undivided concurrence of the whole Trinity.

The epithet of "heaven," or "heavenly," is used as characteristic of the Person of the Father, because He is always represented in Scripture as having his peculiar residence in heaven ; whereas the Son has dwelt among us visibly on earth, and the Holy Ghost is spoken of as dwelling in the hearts of the faithful in this world, though with respect to their nature or essence, they are omnipresent, and consequently in heaven as well as the Father. On this account, our Saviour, in his discourse with Nicodemus, speaking of himself, says "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," John iii. 13. The expression is very remarkable, and, like many others in the same Gospel, directly against the Socinian heresy.

"Deprecations" are prayers that we may be delivered from penalties and protected from dangers and

evils. In the litany, they are addressed to the second Person of the Trinity, and commence at "Remember not, Lord, our offences," &c., and after a petition for forbearance, consist of a comprehensive enumeration of the kinds of evil; and all who know their own hearts and their dangers, bodily and spiritual, will admit that this part is wisely and prudently drawn up. Sin is the first thing prayed against, as the greatest of evils: then its causes and consequences; its several kinds and degrees, inward and outward, spiritual and carnal; against the judgments which it provokes, and the dangers which it causes, both to the security of the government, by sedition, and the welfare of the Church, by heresy of faith and separation from her communion; but chiefly do we pray against that hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandments, which alone can seal us up in final impenitence and everlasting ruin. Then it concludes in an affecting enumeration to the Saviour of the means which he employed for our deliverance; his veiling his glory by humbling himself to assume our nature, his trials and his sufferings, his resurrection and ascension, and mission of the Spirit; *and by the means and for the sake of* these tokens of love, we entreat him to deliver us—events which are still pregnant with the most healing and enlivening influences; and which, if they are seriously and affectionately brought home to our hearts, and resorted to as a source of practical strength—will afford us help and consolation in the most alarming conjunctures, in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity, in the hour of death, and day of judgment!

The words "Be not angry with us for ever" is a quotation from Psalm LXXIX. 5, and signifies our request, that the sufferings which Christ does think fit to inflict upon us, and some of which, we surely all

feel, he would in mercy shorten. It is common to speak of afflictions that last long, as if they were endless.

### INTERVENING CONSIDERATIONS ON SCHISM\*.

Heresy and schism are, in Scripture language, so far of the same signification, as they both imply division or separation. Only *heresy* seems to include in it an obstinate maintaining of some *false doctrines*, which schism does not. For men may forsake the established Church from a dislike to some forms or ceremonies, or points of discipline, and still adhere to the essential articles of faith; which may be the case of many dissenters. Now these are not guilty of heresy, though they are of schism. But when any sect maintains and teaches doctrines contrary to the Gospel or to the true orthodox faith, these are, in the strictest sense of the word, heretics. Such were the Sadducees among the Jews, who denied the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits; and so they are expressly called in Acts, v. 17, where what we translate the *sect* of the Sadducees, is in the original the *heresy* of the Sadducees, and such, I fear, are some of our modern sectaries, the leaders of them at least, who, like the “false teachers” foretold by St. Peter, “have brought in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them,” or as St. Jude expresses it, “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ;” for they certainly do, who deny

\* “A man may forfeit the privileges enjoyed by him as a member of Christ’s Church in two ways; either on account of *heresy*, of his adopting opinions *opposed* to the great truth of God’s word, or through *schism*, through a disregard of Church authority, and a notion that so long as his doctrine is true, he may join what sect he pleases, or even set up one for himself. Such a privilege is sometimes called ‘Christian liberty;’ but the true liberty with which Christ has made us free, is theirs alone who, in reverencing his ministers, walk in the way of his commandments.”—*Essay by a Layman.*

his divinity and the doctrines of the satisfaction and of his sacrifice upon the cross, and our consequent redemption by him, which are the professed tenets of the Socinians, and of other teachers among the separatists, though they do not assume that name.

The word schism in the original is derived from a verb which signifies to cut, divide, or separate; it must therefore relate to some body capable of being divided or separated. Upon reference to Eph. i., we find that the Church is, in figurative language, called the body of Christ; and in 1 Cor. xii., we find the same apostle arguing, from the connexion which subsists between the members of the natural body, to the necessity of a similar connexion between the members of the spiritual body; and the intention of our being baptized into this one body, or Church of Christ, he fully informs us, Eph. iv. 13 and following verses; from which it appears that one great object in the establishment of the Church upon earth was, that it might become one great comprehensive society, continually increasing in numbers and in strength; a firm, compact, indissoluble body, so fitly joined together and connected by the harmony of its component parts, as thereby to be best calculated to produce glory to God and love among men. The term schism denotes a division among the members of which that body is composed, occasioned by a want of obedience to the government which Christ, by his apostles, settled in the Church, and a consequent separation from its communion, in contradistinction to the Divine plan of its establishment; the design of which was, that all Christians should be joined together in the same mind, and in the same worship; continuing, according to the primitive pattern, "in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

In modern times, such is the lamentable confusion of language prevalent, that every society of professing Christians is called a *church*, by what authority and under what teachers soever they may be placed; and in this case there can consequently be no such sin as that of *schism in the world*. For the sin of schism presupposes the establishment of a certain society by Divine authority, with which all Christians are bound to communicate. Now, if the Church, instead of being a society established under a particular government for the purpose of Christians living in communion with it, is anything and everything that men may please to make it, a separation from it becomes impracticable; because a society must have acquired some regular and collected form before a separation from it can take place. But on the supposition that every society of professing Christians is the Church of Christ, the Church in that case consists of as many separate societies under different forms, as there are foolish men to make them; and, consequently, is no longer in that collected state in which it is possible to live in communion with it; for before the members of a Church can live in communion with each other, the Church, as a society, must be at unity with itself.

To determine on the legality or illegality of a practice, from man's opinion concerning it, is to set up a standard of judgment which is perpetually varying, and on that account ever liable to deceive. Christians, in religious matters at least, have a more sure word than that of man to depend on; if they are wise, therefore, they will not suffer themselves to be governed by a lesser authority, when they have a greater at hand always to direct them. Custom has indeed so far reconciled us to the divisions that have taken place among Christians, that they are no longer

seen in the light in which they were seen in the primitive days of the Church; whilst charity, forbidding us to speak harshly of the spiritual condition of our brethren, has in a manner tended to efface the sin of schism from our souls. But though we presume to judge no man, leaving all judgment to that Being who is alone qualified to make allowance for the ignorance, invincible prejudice, imperfect reasonings, and mistaken judgments of his frail creatures; yet it must not from hence be concluded, that it is a matter of indifference whether Christians communicate with the Church or not, or whether there is a doubt upon the subject of schism, whether it be a sin or not.

It may justly be supposed that so heinous a sin as that of schism was condemned by our Saviour and his apostles. The unity of the Church seemed the subject which lay nearest the Saviour's heart when he was about to leave the world to go unto the Father. Not only did he set forth this unity under the expressive image of the vine and the branches, in his last discourse with his disciples, but he made it the leading subject of the prayer which he then addressed to his heavenly Father, not only in behalf of his immediate disciples, but also in behalf of his Church in all successive ages. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 20, 21. Accordingly, there is no subject more strongly and constantly pressed upon us in the Apostolic Epistles than that of unity. It would seem that the apostles, or rather the Holy Ghost by whom they were inspired, foresaw what a strong tendency there would be amongst men to break this unity, (for truly a spirit of separation readily enlists on our side

our self-will and self-love, which are, perhaps, the strongest and worst passions of our fallen nature,) and hence the writings of the apostles frequently and most prominently warn us against division, and all that may lead to it\*. “I beseech you, brethren,” says St. Paul, “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no *divisions* (in the original it is *schisms*) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,” 1 Cor. i. 10. This is very different from the doctrine of our freethinkers and sectaries. Now what these schisms were, he shows us in the 12th verse, “Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.” It does not appear that they differed about essentials (consequently they were not guilty of heresy); but their crime lay in forming themselves into separate parties and factions: in departing not from the faith, but from the unity of the Church. Most justly, therefore, does the apostle ask them, “Is Christ divided?” “Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” Why then do ye distinguish yourselves as followers of *Paul* or of *Apollos*, or of any other teacher, instead of being united in one body as disciples of our common Lord and Master, and Saviour, even of Christ? How does this reproof of the Corinthians condemn all our sectaries, who forsake a Church whose doctrines they do not pretend to find fault with, merely on account of some trifling differences in matters of form and ceremony? How clearly also does it condemn those members of the Church who attach themselves to particular teachers, deserting their own lawful ministers! If

\* See also 1 Cor. x. 17, xii. 25; Rom. xv. 5; Eph. iii. 3, 4; Phil. ii. 1, 2; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. iii.; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. i. 27, and iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Jude 19,

an apostle of Christ utterly disclaimed, and severely reprobated all such attachment, surely none of his fallible successors can have any title to it. If he commanded "all things to be done decently and in order," what excuse can be pleaded for the confusion and disorder which so manifestly prevail, and are encouraged by too many teachers, even by regularly ordained clergymen amongst us! May it please the God of love, who is not the author of confusion, but of peace, to deliver this distracted Church and nation from these daily increasing evils! and "to make us all of one heart and of one soul, united in one bond of peace and truth, of faith and charity, for Jesus Christ's sake!" Amen\*.

The separatists sometimes say, You do not mean to identify the Church of England with the Church of Christ? Are there not many churches in one body, and may I not be a member of one, and you of another, and still be of the body? The reply to this simply is, that the Church of England is the Church of Christ in England, just as much as the Church of Corinth was the Church of Christ in Corinth; and the apostle admonishes us that there should be no schism in the body. We advance no such vain pretensions as that the Church of England

\* "Remember now that schism and making parties and divisions in the Church is not so small a sin as many take it for; it is the accounting it a duty and a *part of holiness* which is the greatest cause that it prospereth in the world; and will it never be reformed till men have *right apprehensions* of the evil of it. Why is it that sober people are so far and free from the sin of swearing, drunkenness, fornication, and lasciviousness, but because these sins are under so odious a character as helpeth them easily to perceive the evil of them; and till Church divisions be rightly apprehended, as whoredom, swearing, and drunkenness are, they will never be cured. Imprint, therefore, on your minds the true character of them which I have laid down, and look abroad upon the effects, and then you will fear this confounding sin as *most fit a consuming plague*."—BAXTER's *Christian Directory*.

is the only Church: we acknowledge many churches in the one Catholic Church. But before dissenters can justify such separation as is practised amongst us now, they must bring a scriptural instance of a separate communion being set up in some place where the Church of Christ was planted. If they can show that there were some Christians at Corinth who did not belong to the Church of Corinth; if they can show that there were in Corinth churches of Episcopalians, or Independents, or Congregationists, or Paulists, &c. living together, and that unreproved and unrebuted by the apostle, then, but not till then, can they justify the awful sin of dissent, as it is practised, without reproof, and almost with approbation, in these days.

It may here be retorted, perhaps, that our Church was guilty of schism in separating from the Church of Rome, for so Romanists represent the matter; and hence charge us with the novelty of our religion, whereas in reality it is *her corrupt additions to the truth that are novelties*\*. Common as is the notion in our day that our Church did so separate; there never was a more groundless notion, or one more contrary to fact. *The Church of England never separated from the Church of Rome or from any other*

\* Not to speak of the Greek Church, and those of Armenia and Abyssinia differing from the Roman, Dr. Buchanan, in his *Asiatic Researches*, mentions that when the Portuguese adventurers first arrived at the coast of Malabar, they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of one hundred Christian churches. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship they were offended. "These churches," said the Portuguese, "belong to the Pope." "Who is the Pope?" said the natives, "we never heard of him." For 1300 years they had maintained the order and discipline of a regular Church, under episcopal jurisdiction, having enjoyed a succession of bishops, appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch. "We," said they, "are of the true faith, whatever you from the West may be; for we come from that place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians."

*Church*\*. When she sank under the usurpation of the Church of Rome, she did not thereby forfeit her right to release herself from that cruel bondage, when God put it into the hearts of his servants to attempt it, and enabled them to succeed in that attempt; and

\* “The misapprehension of even well-educated persons on this subject is surprising. It is common to hear the Protestant Church of England spoken of as if it were a distinct body from that Church which subsisted in England at the time of the Reformation, as if the Protestant clergy then *supplanted* the clergy of the Church of Rome; whereas it is notorious that when the Reformation was established, *all the parochial clergy, except eighty, conformed*. The bishops, save only one, pursued a different course; but, happily, an adequate supply was found in those bishops who had retired from the persecution in the reign of Mary. And thus, with a very small exception, the Church, in Elizabeth’s reign, consisted of the very same body of persons which formed it in the preceding reign. And the Reformation in England was not one set of individuals supplanting another, but was what its name strictly expresses, the reformation of that Church which had existed in this land without interruption from the earliest times.”—See STRYPE’s *Annals*.

In Ireland the case is even still stronger, as appears from a recent tract, entitled *Historical Notices of peculiar Tenets of the Church of Rome*. As the effrontery of the schismatical Roman bishops in Ireland in assuming the style of the Irish sees, has led some persons ignorantly to suppose that they are the representatives of the ancient Irish Church, and that the Protestant bishops are intruders, it is right to state that, by the records of the Irish Church, it appears, that when, in Queen Elizabeth’s reign, the Roman jurisdiction was renounced, of all the Irish bishops, only two, namely, Walsh, bishop of Clonard, and Leverous, bishop of Kildare, suffered deprivation for refusing to join in that renunciation. Two others, Lacey, bishop of Limerick, and Skiddy, bishop of Cork and Cloyne, resigned, the former in 1566, the latter in 1571, possibly from scruples on the same score. That the resignation of these two last-named bishops had any connexion at all with this event, does not rest upon any valid testimony. (See MANT’s *History of the Church of Ireland*; Appendix.) The rest, to the number of twenty-two or twenty-three, *were continued in their sees, and from them the present orthodox or Protestant bishops have derived their orders*, being the successors, by unbroken and uninterrupted descent, of the ancient Irish Church; which Church, be it remembered, was the last in Europe that fell under the usurped jurisdiction of Rome, her metropolitans not having received the Roman pall (the badge of slavery, as appears by the 5th Canon of the Fourth Lateran Council) till 1152.

it was not any minute scruples of over-nice consciences, any matter of standing or kneeling, of organs or surplices, which occasioned them to reform; but what they had to reform was, *idolatry in the public services of the Church*: not so much the material idolatry of image worship, as the crime of worshipping the creature more than the Creator, and setting up a thousand sainted mediators in the place of the “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” 1 Tim. ii. 5. In doing this, the Church of England used her Christian liberty, and performed her Christian obligations, and those were the real schismatics who conformed during the first ten years of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, and subsequently separated from the National Church on the arrival of a bull of excommunication from the Bishop of Rome, when he found the nation would not acknowledge his supremacy. Out of *eighteen centuries*, during which the Church of England existed, somewhat less than *four centuries and a half* were passed under the usurped domination of Rome.

As modern English histories are very defective on this point, and there is in consequence much misapprehension upon it, I will give a brief sketch of the real state of the case. The Church of England was originally an independent Church, founded not by emissaries from Rome, but at a period not far removed from the apostolic times, and perhaps even by an apostle himself. Archbishop Usher and Bishops Stillingfleet and Burgess have successfully established this on the authority of Clemens Romanus (alluded to, Phil. iv. 3); Theodoret, Origen, A. D. 230; Jerome, A. D. 378; Athanasius and Tertullian, as also on that of Gildas and Bede, British historians, the latter of whom, himself strongly addicted to Romanism, asserts that in the Diocletian persecution, A. D. 305, many

British churches were burned, and Christians suffered martyrdom, amongst whom was St. Alban, who suffered near to the place now called St. Alban's. Speckman, in his account of the Council of Arles, convoked by Constantine, A. D. 314, mentions the British bishops who attended it; and the manner in which that council was conducted, shows that they esteemed them independent of the authority of Rome; and that they were at the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 347, we are assured both by Athanasius and Hilary; and though, owing to the departure of the Roman legions, the British Christians were left a prey to the invasions of the barbarous nations, yet we have memorials of the continued existence of their ancient Church, and of St. David's having been made the metropolitan see; and when the monk Austin or Augustin, sent by Gregory (who must not be confounded with the great and learned father Augustin, who flourished 200 years previous), desired to bring it to own the Pope's supremacy, the Britons refused, replying that their Church had been governed by its own bishops for nearly 600 years, (that is from the first introduction of the Gospel,) independently of any foreign authority; and that the *nature* also of their Christianity differed from the religion of Rome is evident from their reluctance to hold communion with the Anglo-Saxons, when converted by Austin, because "they corrupted with images and idolatry the true religion of Christ." From this time, however, an intercourse existed between the two churches: but it was not till the Norman conquest, that the Pope having supported William the First in his invasion of the kingdom, thence took opportunity to enlarge his encroachments. See Burn's *Eccles. Law*. And with regard to Ireland, it was not till the twelfth century the Pope claimed it; and his usurpation was acquiesced in by the ignorance of the

people at large, and the wicked ambition of Henry the Second, who, in order to have a plea for invading Ireland, cared not to examine the principle it involved. But the Pope did not, as modern Romanists admit, usurp this authority over the Irish Church without many violent struggles and bitter conflicts and strife\*. Until the Synod of Kells, in 1152, the archbishops of Ireland never condescended to receive their palls from Rome, (as has already been observed in the note, p. 176,) and down to the year 1315, a Popish author acknowledges, that the Irish ecclesiastics took no oath to the Pope, that they never applied to the see of Rome, as the Romish bishops here now do for bulls of nomination, institution, or exemptions; that they never appealed to Rome for the decision of ecclesiastical causes; so that the authority of the Pope over the Irish Church was a usurpation which the Church was bound to cast off in exact accordance with a canon of the Third General Council, that of Ephesus.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LITANY, CONTINUED.—OCCASIONAL PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS.

THE words, "Good Lord, deliver us," refer to the sentence previously uttered by the minister, so that the prayer is to be understood thus: Good Lord deliver us from all evil and mischief, &c. The minister, consequently, keeps up his voice at the end of his part, in order to keep up its connexion with

\* *The Catholic Clergy of Ireland—their cause defended; a sermon by Dr. Hook.*

that to be repeated by the people. The same may be observed of the form in the next division of the litany, where, in order that it may please Him to confer upon us the various blessings previously mentioned by the minister, we beseech the good Lord to hear us. The words are put last, that the people might not seem to beg deliverance from they knew not what.

The frequent use of "Good Lord, deliver us," is not a vain repetition, being every time applied to distinct matter, and consequently makes a distinct prayer, and it is as if we should say frequently, as we certainly must in any other prayer, such words as these, Grant, O Lord, &c., We beseech Thee, &c.; and here I may repeat what was before observed, that when a prayer is used by way of responses, both minister and people are to join, at least mentally, in the whole; though they vocally pronounce only their respective parts. This should be carefully remembered in the litany, when there are extraordinary occasions for it.

The Church is right in praying against *sudden* death, for even in the case of such as are prepared, their example and dying advice may be more than ordinarily instructive and beneficial to others; but not to speak of this, Christian humility may desire space for completer preparation; and of those who profess the contrary, are they so very certain, as this implies, that every part both of their worldly affairs, and their eternal concerns is in the best condition to which it can be brought? or may not this apparent readiness to die at any time arise from a secret dread to think of dying at all, or a secret unbelief, more or less, of what will follow after death? But whatever a few may imagine best for themselves, justly or unjustly, some previous notice is undeniably best for the

generality: and common prayers must be adapted to common cases; always submitting it to God to make such exceptions where He shall think proper\*.

On the last clause of the deprecations it is worthy of observation, that in enumerating the most critical periods of our being, the "time of our wealth" is represented as more alarming than the "time of our tribulation," and as inferior in awfulness only to the "hour of death," and to the "day of judgment," a most awakening comment on our Lord's declaration, that "it is a hard thing for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Though the state of our souls at the hour of death determines our condition at the day of judgment, yet does the Church direct us to pray for grace and favour at *both*: the best life and death can obtain acquittance and reward only through the pardoning sentence of our Judge; great cause have we, therefore, to pray for ourselves, as St. Paul did for Onesiphorus, "that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day," 2 Tim. i. 18.

Intercessory prayer is at once a privilege and duty. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," says the Psalmist, Psalm cxxii. 6. "Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," says our blessed Lord himself, Matt. v. 44. The apostolic epistles abound with beautiful examples of this kind of charitable supplication; and surely, if we are truly sensible of the value of men's souls, and the innumerable benefits of Christ's free and unlimited salvation; if we feel a lively concern on account of the delusions and danger of the ungodly among mankind; if we feel any sympathy with the praying disciples of our common Saviour and Lord, we cannot but acknow-

\* In the Primer, the words are sudden and unprovided death, which also corresponds with the Latin in the Office of Sarum. The expression has probably reference to a *violent* death.

ledge that intercessory prayer is a duty at all times incumbent upon us, and we cannot but feel pleasure, as we shall assuredly find also profit, in the discharge of it.

At the commencement of the INTERCESSIONS, because it may seem presumptuous for us to pray for others, since we are unworthy to pray for ourselves, we acknowledge that we are sinners. The spirit and temper of Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 33, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes," is beautifully adopted into this part of the litany. The Intercessions themselves are distinguished throughout by a rare union of comprehensiveness and detail. They give the most enlarged view of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and evince the most discriminative tenderness for its particular members; especially for the desolate, that mourn unseen by any but their God; for infancy that cannot, and for criminality that dare not, approach the throne of mercy. We pray first for the Catholic Church; for our own National Church, its earthly head, and its pastors in their apostolic orders, the dispensers of justice, the people of God in general; peace, foreign and domestic, as preparatory to the enlargement and final establishment of our Saviour's promised dominion; our own personal concern in that kingdom is then distinctly and instructedly adverted to. We ask from God, as the foundation of all other blessings, the essence of religion, that union of Divine love and holy dread in the heart, which alone can produce a life of uniform and regular advancement in religion, that "increase of grace which hears the word of God *meekly*, not with a desire to cavil, or object, or criticise, receives it with purity of affection, and, like a grateful soil, brings forth the fruits of righteousness;" and we provide for every casualty and variety to which a

state of grace is liable, by entreating our great Benefactor to bring back those who have gone astray, to add fresh strength to those who are upright in the way, to invigorate those whose treadings had well nigh slipped, to raise up them that had actually been moved to do evil, and to grant to all his militant servants a final triumph over their spiritual adversary.

By thus making these things the subject of prime solicitude in our supplications, the Church teaches us, in the spirit of our Lord's injunction, to seek first, to seek supremely, the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Next she leads us to pour forth intercessions for all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation, of whose several exigencies an enumeration follows,—the traveller; the mother whose hour is come; the sick; the young child; the prisoner; the captive abroad; the orphan; the widow; the desolate and oppressed;—and, lest a soul should be forgotten, the Church exclaims in a fulness of love resembling the love of God, “have mercy upon all men.” Then, as if publicly to declare that we bear enmity against none, we pray God to forgive those who have ever done us wrong.—An enumeration so full, that perhaps no additional class of peril or affliction can be specified; so appropriate, that our whole language cannot furnish juster expressions; and so affectionate, that it has doubtless awakened and cherished the most kindly feelings and most indefatigable exertions of multitudes now employed in better worlds and higher ministrations. Attention having thus been paid to the souls and bodies of men, the whole branch of intercession is summed up in two short petitions; the one for temporal good, implied under “the kindly fruits of the earth;” the other, a brief abstract of our spiritual wants, which are reducible to pardon for the

past, and improvement for the future. Let those who accuse our public prayers as too general in their form, view this punctual and regular enumeration of all evils that are hurtful, or of all goods that are expedient for the bodies or souls of men, either for the Church in general, or for any of its members in particular; let them seek diligently through their own performances, whether extempore or composed; let them search all their assemblies, and see if there be any such thing in their worship; anything so full in its matter, so regular in its method, and solemn in its expressions, as our litany.

It may be useful to enlarge a little as to the meaning of some of these expressions.

By their *preaching*.—This word formerly included all the duties of the clerical office, excepting administering the sacraments; in which sense it is used in the Twenty-third Article of our Church. Here it appears to comprehend *all* the ministerial functions.

*Sins, negligences, and ignorances*.—By “sins” are to be understood sins of commission, gross and deliberate transgressions. By “negligences,” sins into which we have been led by inadvertency, carelessness, or surprise, and which are sins of omission, inasmuch as they are contrary to that “care and watchfulness” so expressly required of us in the Gospel. “Ignorances” are sinful when they proceed from neglect of the proper means of attaining knowledge. Unavoidable ignorance is a misfortune; but to plead it in ordinary cases, now that the full light of the Gospel shines, is rather an aggravation than a palliation of guilt.

*Deadly sin*.—Not such as are deadly, by way of distinction, as opposed to *venial* sins (for there are no sins *venial* in their own nature), but such as those which David calls presumptuous sins, and begs par-

ticular preservation from, or those which are most heinous and crying above others.

*Deal not with us after our sins.*—We do not mean to beg that God would have nothing to do with us after committing sin. The word *after*, in old English, means “according to.” The language is adopted from Psalm ciii. 10, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;” where we may observe, the “*after*” in the former clause is explained by “according to” in the latter. We clear God’s justice in punishing us, but apply to his mercy to proportion his chastisements according to our ability of bearing, and not according to what our sins deserve.

THE LORD’S PRAYER is introduced here; for the litany was drawn up and used formerly as a separate service, and without this perfect summary of all her petitions annexed, the Church does not consider any of her services complete.

The “noble works” here alluded to, as “declared to us by our fathers,” are God’s rescuing our Church and country from Popery, superstition, and fanaticism.

THE SUPPLICATIONS which follow, were added above 1100 years ago, when the Church was suffering persecution from the inroads of barbarous nations; and are they not suitable for, and expressive of her perils at the present day, when cold indifference, secret opposition, pretended attachment, and open defiance assail her on every side? We pray God to arise, help, and deliver us, not for our merits, but his own glorious perfections, and the instruction of his creatures.

There is a striking example of the mode in which the compilers of our liturgy removed the corruptions which had been annexed to it, in the beautiful prayer commencing “We humbly beseech thee,” which occurs

here; it was composed about the sixth century, but afterwards corrupted by being made to entreat God *for the sake of the intercession of his saints*. It was reformed, not only by the omission of the unscriptural clause, but by the insertion of a new one, for the sake of greater security: "Grant that in all our troubles, we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy."

#### PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS UPON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

THE FIVE FIRST PRAYERS are deprecations, introduced in conformity with the ancient liturgies, and in acknowledgment that drought, excessive rain, famine, war and tumults, and pestilence, are visitations sent upon the world by the Almighty, that the inhabitants may learn righteousness. THE THREE REMAINING are intercessions.

The Ember days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent, the feast of Pentecost, September 14, and December 13. Ember signifies abstinence or ashes. These days are appointed to be kept as fasts, because the four Sundays which respectively follow them, are the appointed seasons for the ordination of the clergy. *Canon. 31.* St. Paul declares it the duty of all Christians to pray for those set in ministerial authority over them: and that fasting was practised by the early Church at the season when such ministers were ordained, see *Acts xiii. 3*; and the custom of prayer and fasting at such times is of the highest importance to be continued for ever in the Church, to the end that all those who are appointed to feed the flock of Christ may be true and lawful shepherds, "having entered in by the door," that is, the apostolical way of ordination, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the bishop, and not *hiredlings* who climb up some other way.

There are two prayers for these occasions, either of which may be used; the former is thought to be more proper to be used in the early part of the week, being for the ordinaries and these to be ordained: to guide the minds of the bishops, and assisting presbyters to ordain qualified persons; the latter, more suitable for the end of the week, beseeching the Holy Spirit upon all who have been ordained. These prayers are sometimes omitted; and the carelessness which occasions this is much to be regretted. For to those who think on the salvation of the souls of men, and hold it of importance that they should be instructed in the faith, what subject of prayer can be so momentous or interesting as those which relate to a proper selection of ministers, and to their being furnished with grace and power from above, daily to discharge their sacred and responsible functions? These truly Christian prayers are worthy of being offered, not in the congregation only, but in domestic prayer. May the Master of the Christian household hear them from many a devout worshipper; and may He respond to them in blessings to his Church, and glory to his name, through many a zealous and faithful pastor!

It was wise and pious to insert a PRAYER FOR THE PARLIAMENT. This prayer is of the like importance to the state, as that for the Ember weeks is for the Church; and so both jointly to our Constitution, in which the Church and State are so linked together and united by the fundamental laws of this realm, that they cannot be divided without being destroyed: a maxim fully proved by the consultations of that memorable parliament which overthrew both, and which gave occasion to have the intermediate part of this prayer inserted after the Restoration. It is to be read when Parliament is adjourned, for it is still the

same session ; but it is not read when Parliament is prorogued, not being then empowered to do business, as upon an adjournment. Circumstances have rendered this prayer more particularly needful since that fatal breaking in upon the Constitution, by which Socinians, Romanists, &c. legislate now for the National Church ; and whilst the two former descriptions of men are banded together for her destruction, churchmen are in general lukewarm and indifferent in her defence. Great need have we therefore to cry earnestly for help to One that is mighty, that our legislators may have the fear of God before their eyes, that they "may settle all things upon the best and surest foundation, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations."

The term "religious" is here applied to the Sovereign, either because of his office being God's ordinance, and therefore sacred, on account of which he is an object of most awful regard, or it is used like the terms "most Christian," "most catholic," to denote the good qualities which princes profess and should have. We may observe that this prayer as it now stands, was originally used in the reign of a king acknowledged to be unfeignedly religious, Charles the First.

The prayer used in place of the litany, when the latter is not appointed to be said, is that amazing digest of intercession, "The collect FOR ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN," sometimes called the "Lesser Litany." It commences (as is generally the case with our prayers) with a title appropriate to the purport of the prayer itself. Either Bishop Sanderson or Bishop Gunning was the author. It is evidently built upon the plan of the Lord's prayer.

Neither here, nor in the litany, nor in the prayer for the Church militant, do we make any express mention of our own National Church, because in praying for the Catholic Church, we include our own as contained and embodied in it.

The word "Catholic" is an abbreviation of the Greek phrase "kath holon ton kosmon," *throughout the whole world*, and is applied to the Church of Christ as denoting that it is an *universal* Church, one intended to embrace all kindreds, nations, and languages, and not to be limited like the Jewish Church, to one particular people. Romanists assert theirs to be the Catholic Church, and it is one of the most corrupt parts of it; but it is foolish presumption in them to assume for it exclusively the title of the Catholic Church, which it no more is, than one diseased limb, though perhaps the larger for being diseased, is the whole body of a man. To call them Catholics is now grown very common, and though names are of very little importance, yet it is wrong to flatter and harden them by giving them a title which they both claim unjustly, and turn into an argument against us. There are instances of those high in authority in that Church abusing the ignorance of the uneducated, by making them believe that the term Catholic in our creeds is intended exclusively to designate their communion; and certainly, in a general point of view, it is of no small importance, *especially considering the use of this term in the authorized standards of our Church*, that we should avoid speaking in a way which, strictly understood, is an implicit admission that we are guilty of schism.

Though we have already in the psalms and hymns after the lessons and in the doxology, rendered "thanks for the great benefits received at God's hands," yet THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING is a more

methodical summary of the several mercies of God "to us and to all men" than we have had before; and it furnishes an opportunity of thanking Him for recent instances of his loving-kindness to the members of our own congregation, for we ought to ask nothing from God, without remembering what we have received from Him.

The use of the parenthesis in the prayer for all conditions of men, and also in the general thanksgiving, is, that every one who desires it, may, by signifying that desire, have a separate share in either. But a weak and false shame has of late years prevailed, and caused many Christians to neglect this duty, and the nature of the duty seems not sufficiently understood;—a duty, I say, for it is not only a privilege, but a duty. One great reason for which public worship was ordained, was that it should be a *public manifestation of our faith and dependence upon God*. This we do by attending public worship, when health and strength permit; but when sickness or calamity prevent us from thus manifesting that faith, and acknowledging that dependence, the Church proposes to us another way of doing the same thing, namely, by sending our names to the minister, and requesting him to desire the prayers of the congregation in our behalf. By doing this, we proclaim our faith in God—we publicly own, by our express request, as at other times we do by our presence, that on Him we lean for support, and Him we acknowledge as the source of all we are, all we have, and all we hope for,—and if at any time the soul should feel more deeply that faith and dependence, and more readiness and delight in avowing it, the hour of sickness, and pain, and calamity, is that time. Yet how few do manifest this faith,—how often is it that only the poor, and that few of them, think of their duty,—how many too do

it by halves, and instead of desiring their name to be mentioned, say that the prayers of the congregation are desired by a person afflicted, &c. Oh, how false is this shame, this sheepish and cold confession of God ! Is this the feeling of those who gloried in the name of Christ, not only rejoiced in receiving and acknowledging his blessings, but cheerfully embraced reproof and mockery, shame and sufferings, for his sake ? After recovering also from sickness, or escape from calamity, how few think of thus sending in their name to return thanks ! Yet the neglect of this argues a very insufficient sense of our obligations to our heavenly Father, of that public tribute of gratitude so justly due to Him, and so edifying to our fellow-worshippers. See 2 Kings v. 15 ; Luke xvii. 16, 17, 18 ; Psalm xxxviii. 22 ; Acts iii. 8.

There are Scripture examples and directions to sing praise to God. We find in the Testament, it was practised by the Jews before their law was given, as well as after. The book of Psalms consists wholly of religious songs ; and directs the saints of the Lord to sing unto Him and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness ; to sing unto the honour of his name, and make his praise glorious ; to sing praises unto our God, while we have any being, Psalms xxx. 4.; lvi. 2.; cxlii. 2. The prophets foretell that in the Gospel times, men shall sing for the glory of the Lord ; and which brings the prediction home to us, "They shall cry aloud, and glorify God in the isles of the seas," Isa. xxiv. 14, 15. Accordingly St. Paul, Acts xvi. 25, "not only himself with Silas, even in prison, " sang praises unto God, " but appoints that all Christians should speak to themselves, and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody with grace in their hearts to the Lord," Eph. v. 19 ; Col. iii. 16 ; and St. James prescribes, "In

any marry?" in a joyful frame of mind on account of blessings received, (for the word *mirth* comprehended anciently the most serious kind of gladness,) "let him sing psalms." James v. 13.

In pursuance of these rules, the first Christians made singing a constant part of their worship; afterwards the singers by profession, who had been appointed to lead them, usurped the whole performance. At the Reformation, this right was restored, but of late years, the use of it hath declined very unhappily. But it is worth our while to consider what it is, either to disdain, or be ashamed, or be too indolent to lift up our voices to the honour of our Maker, when we come into his house professedly to worship Him, and He hath commanded that one part of his worship shall be this\*.

Standing seems the posture most proper during the singing of the metrical psalms; we stand during the

\* This I fear must be attributed principally to the false delicacy (to give it no harsher name) of the upper classes. There is in this nation, owing to the closeness with which the different classes touch upon each other, a constant tendency in each class to imitate the manners of those immediately above them. Hence it happens that the silence of the principal persons in the Church is sure to throw a damp on those below them; and so the sacred psalmody falls to a few hired singers, and the voices of the congregation, which used in ancient times to swell in such solemn grandeur, that the roofs of the sacred building, and the very shore of the sea re-echoed with the sound, are now replaced by the organ —poor substitute for the outpouring of a thousand souls!

Will not the fair daughters of the Church strive to take away this reproach? Whence arises this ill-timed reserve? "Beautiful as the polished corners of the temple," why should your hearts also be as cold? Can it be right to confine to the social and domestic circle that delightful power which has often been acquired with so much assiduity? Shall those lips, which are cheerfully opened in song to obtain the thanks and win the applause of human society, be closed when the praises of God are to be sung? Shall the voice be mute only in the temple of Him who gave it power to please?—GRESLEY'S *Portrait of an English Churchman*. See also an appropriate Sermon by the Rev. F. CLOSE, of Cheltenham.

saying or singing of the prose psalms, and from analogy, we may reason, therefore, that this posture, if proper in the one case, is proper also in the other. If people stand at the doxology, as doubtless they should, because it is an ascribing of glory to God, they should do so likewise during the psalm that precedes ; for it, no less than the doxology, is sung to the glory of God. Besides, the psalm is most frequently *directed to God* himself in the form of thanksgiving or of prayer, and sitting is not a proper posture surely in which to address the Almighty.

If the clergyman would select the psalms and the music himself, and not leave it to the parish clerk, and choose a few of the simplest and most familiar tunes, which should be sung with modesty and humility, it might tend to render this branch of worship more beneficial.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR HOLY COMMUNION.

VERY opposite opinions have been held with regard to the Sacraments. At one period it was maintained that, without a possibility of failure, they communicated effectual grace by a power inherent in themselves ; in the present day they are frequently mentioned, together with prayer and preaching, under the general term *ordinances*, without any distinctive notice of superior character imparted by the Saviour, and it seems to be forgotten that the side of the Lord Jesus being smitten, as the emblem of his Church, forthwith came there-out blood and water : “ This is he that came by water and blood : not by water only, but by water and blood,” 1 John v. 6.

The sentiments of the Church of Rome and of our Church are by no means similar on the subject of the Lord's Supper. The following comparison of the respective tenets of both churches, taken from their accredited formularies, will exhibit numerous and striking marks of difference. The Romish Church affirms the change of the substance of the bread and wine, commonly called Transubstantiation; our Church, on the contrary, asserts that such a doctrine "cannot be proved by holy writ, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions." (*Article xxviii.*)

The Romish Church affirms a bodily, that is, a substantial presence and receiving; (*Council of Trent*, 13th Sess., can. 4 and 8.) Our Church, whilst she admits a real presence, and that "Christ's body and blood are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful," *no less clearly maintains that such presence is spiritual*, and that Christ's body and blood are only spiritually received; (*Articles xxviii., xxix.*)

The Romish Church, believing the bread and wine to be changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, esteems it a fit object for religious worship, elevating and carrying it in procession, offering it to the gaze of the multitude, and adoring it as she would Christ himself; (*Council of Trent*, Sess. 13, can. 6.) Our Church condemns such practices as inconsistent with the ordinance of Christ, and in particular describes such adoration as "idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;" (*Articles xxv. xxviii.*, and *Protestation at end of Communion Service.*)

The Romish Church reserves the bread and wine, or, as she expresses it, the true body of our Lord which remains in the consecrated particles which are left after the communion, for conveyance to the sick, according to the pompous ceremonial of her religion;

(*Council of Trent*, 13th Sess., can. 7.) Our Church pronounces such reservation of it to be a departure from Christ's ordinance, and directs that it be consumed immediately on the spot; (*Article xxviii.*, and *Rubric after Communion*.) Further, as to the preparation for receiving this sacrament, there are essential differences between the Romish Church and ours, consisting, in the first place, between confession to a priest and to Almighty God; and next, between the injunction which renders confession to a priest absolutely necessary, (*Council of Trent*, 13th Sess., can. 11,) and the exhortation which *invites the scrupulous penitent voluntarily to seek spiritual comfort and counsel from a minister of God's word*.

The Romish Church sets at nought the express commandment of our Lord, and mutilates his ordinance, by denying the cup to the laity; (*Council of Trent*, 21st Sess. can. 1—3.) Our Church controverts and condemns this; (*Article xxx.*)

The Romish Church celebrates the service for this sacrament, as also the whole of her liturgy, in Latin, whatever be the vernacular language of the country where it is celebrated (*Council of Trent*, 22nd Sess., can. 9); our Church condemns this expressly, (*Article xxiii.*)

The Romish Church asserts this sacrament to be a true and proper sacrifice, as if the real and proper body and blood once offered upon the cross, were again offered to God, and as if a propitiatory offering were thus again and again made to God for the dead as well as for the living; (*Council of Trent*, 22nd Sess., can. 1—4.) Our Church (*Article xxxi.*) reprobates this, asserting it to be a *blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit*—language more severe than usual, but justified by her sense of the injuriousness of the doctrine to our Saviour's honour, and of its dangerous deceitfulness,

by giving the people a false method and false hope of pardon.

The Romish Church approves of solitary masses performed by the priest alone (decree and 8th can., 22nd Sess. *Council of Trent*); our Church condemns this (Article xxxi., and Rubric at the end of Communion.) These specimens may assist us in judging as to the agreement of the two Churches so far as regards the fundamental doctrines and instructions of the Gospel, in connexion with this holy sacrament.

Our Church has retained two most scriptural appellations of this sacrament: 1st, THE LORD'S SUPPER, (a name which the Romanists cannot endure, because it destroys their notion of a sacrifice, and their use of private mass,) but which was settled in the apostles' time by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 20: and 2nd, THE COMMUNION, 1 Cor. x. 16, a name given to it, partly because by this we testify our communion with Christ our head, partly because it unites us together with all our fellow Christians, partly because all good Christians have a right to partake of it. It is sometimes also called the Eucharist, a title recognised by our Church when she states that (although deep penitence, firm reliance on the blood of Christ, and faithful efforts for growing in grace, are essential to our deriving benefits therefrom,) we must, above all things, give most humble and hearty thanks to each Divine person of the Godhead, for the gracious share severally taken in our redemption. This sacrament was celebrated more frequently in the purest ages of Christianity than it is at the present day, for it then made a constant part of the daily service, Acts ii. 46; and our Church reminds us of this obligation to communicate more frequently, by appointing a great part of the office to be used on all Sundays and holydays, and to be said at the altar, where the prayers of the Church of old used to be

made, because this was the proper place to commemorate Jesus, our only Mediator, by whom all our prayers were accepted, and the office was thence called "The Service of the Altar."

Christ did not point out any particular method for the administration of it, it was consequently various in divers churches; only all were agreed in using the Lord's prayer, and reciting the words of the institution, which therefore some think was all the apostles used; but their successors in several churches added several devout forms thereto, which by the fashion of adding to them in every age, contracted many superstitions of later times, though they still retained much of true and pure primitive devotion, easily distinguishable from the modern corruptions. These latter novelties the Reformers extracted, and so composed the admirable office which we use, which comes as nigh as can be to the apostolic and ancient Catholic Church, and is the most exact form extant in the Christian world. There is a vulgar error that it is chiefly copied from the Romish Missal, but a comparison with the latter will show that they differ considerably: if the Reformers had any particular model in view, it was that which Osmund, bishop of Sarum, revised for the use of his diocese, in the eleventh century.

The two Sacraments are inseparably connected with each other, and our Church recognises this. That which is begun in us by means of Baptism, is continued and sustained by means of the Lord's Supper. That new and regenerate life which we receive in the former, is nourished and perfected in the use of the latter. Baptism provided for our entrance into Christ's Church, brought us within the reach of all the good things that are treasured up for the people of God, set us free from the original curse of the law,

blotted out past sins, and placed us in the presence of a reconciled God. The Lord's Supper was then offered for our continual support, to be unto us a perpetual means of grace, that we might be able "to follow on to know the Lord," to hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, and endure the painful trials of the wilderness. In the Baptismal service accordingly, we are called to die with Christ, to rise with him, to be like him. In the Communion service, we are invited to feed on Christ, to dwell with him, to be one with him. In the former we behold the Divine seed, the essential elements, the ensured progress of our inward Christianity; in the latter we may experience the nourishment of that seed, and its radication in the heart. The Baptismal service is grand, solemn, and awakening; the office of the Lord's Supper is at once sublime, pathetic, and inexpressibly delightful to the well prepared recipient. The one authoritatively points out the way in which we should go; the other guides, supports, and cheers us in that way. In a word, the one impressively teaches the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; whilst the other, with a gentle but powerful attraction, draws us on to perfection.

Besides what has been already stated, the desire of the Church to induce her members to communicate frequently, is further shown by her pathetical exhortation before the Communion, and the Rubric after it; her teaching them in the Catechism that this sacrament, as well as the other of Baptism, is "generally necessary to salvation," and carefully informing them of the qualifications requisite for their due participation; her regulation at the end of the Office of Confirmation, that "none shall be admitted to the holy communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready (that is, at a competent age and instructed in the

Catechism,) and desirous to be confirmed," evidently regarding their admission to this holy right as a great Christian privilege, and intimating that when they shall have been confirmed, they are to be admitted; and her particularly recommending the receiving of this sacrament to persons under circumstances of peculiar solemnity, namely, at the first opportunity after marriage, and after childbirth respectively; and her providing a particular office for administering it to the sick.

The Communion service consists of three parts; the Ante-communion, or preparation to the communion, a great part of which is read in the daily service; the actual celebration of the holy mystery; the Post-communion, containing the prayers and thanksgivings after the elements have been received.

As many as intend to be partakers of the communion are "enjoined to signify their names to the curate" on some previous day, in order that if there be any among them not duly qualified, he may persuade them to abstain for some time, or in case of their refusal, to repel them. The following are considered unqualified: persons unconfirmed,—under Church censures,—under frenzy,—or whose lives *notoriously* and flagitiously contradict their Christian profession.

It is affirmed by some of the dissenters that our Church admits indiscriminately all persons to the communion, and thus sanctions profanation of it; but her Twenty-ninth Article, her Rubric above-mentioned, and her solemn and startling admonition when notice of the intended celebration of the ordinance is given, exhibit, on the contrary, the greatest solicitude to maintain its sacred character, and guard against any abuse. To these precautions of the Church may be added, that her ministers by frequent addresses from

the pulpit, provide that their congregations shall well understand who are invited, and who are forbidden, to come to the Lord's table: after this the matter lies between them and God, and if they come unprepared, the guilt is upon their own heads. The Church pretends not to the "discerning of spirits," and therefore, when the evidence of the outward life is sufficiently satisfactory, she conceives that she would be usurping God's prerogative, if she attempted to *decide* upon the inward spiritual condition. If she exercised an authority upon the evidence (the doubtful and most deceptive evidence) of frames and feelings, she might, by forbidding approach to the table, "break the bruised reed," and "make sad those whom God had not made sad;" and by licensing an approach, she might sustain a delusive profession, and foster a spirit of successful hypocrisy. In the happy expression of the author of *Essays on the Church*, she "endorses no man's pretensions." She knows well that in this world no certain line, no line of which eternity will prove the perfect accuracy, can be drawn between the converted and the unconverted. We may hope and believe well of those who walk consistently, but we cannot pronounce decisively; and, on the other hand, we may be very doubtful of the state of individuals, who, to the eye of God, have the root of the matter in them, and are Christians indeed, although the manifestation of their faith is as yet but very indistinct. We can lay down no test, which of itself can be deemed perfectly conclusive as to the determination of a man's actual condition before God. The Church, acting upon this principle of not presuming to pass judgment upon an individual's state, except when the broad evidence of palpable ungodliness enables her to say, "By their fruit we may know them," may indeed run the risk of admitting the unconverted to the table; but, upon the

other hand, she avoids the greater danger of informing a man that she believes him to be converted, and thus, rocking him to a sleep of false security, if his profession should be without inward holiness.

The system of the dissenters themselves exhibits grievously evils of this nature. They attempt to put the Church into the condition she was in apostolic days, when the hearts of disciples could be read through by the gift of "discerning of spirits." They try to draw a line, without possessing the knowledge needful for its being drawn with accuracy, and after search into character and condition being had, they enrol a man among the faithful, the approved of the Church. If after this act he should prove a hypocrite, has not his Church contributed to deceive him? We content ourselves with telling communicants what they should be, and commanding them to *examine themselves* whether they are so, and to act upon their convictions. They examine communicants, and announce them tried and found faithful. This system fosters censoriousness, and holds out a bounty to hypocrisy, and on trial has been found to be unavailing; for the admission of dissenters themselves show that there are ways and means of getting within the select and approved circle which speak ill for such discipline. "If," says one of their ministers\*, "men of unsanctified dispositions be admitted into the Church, what can be expected from such, in a time of conflicting opinion, but fuel for the flame of contention? The danger is considerably increased when the individuals *improperly admitted* are persons of property. For the sake of its glittering exterior, many a Church has taken a serpent to its bosom; or to adopt a scriptural allusion, has welcomed an Achan to the camp, for the sake of his Babylonish vest and golden

\* JAMES'S *Church Member's Guide*.

wedge." What awful injury must be done to the soul, to the conscience, by thus endorsing such hollow, baseless pretensions! Surely it is better to pass no judgment, than such hardening and deceptive judgments as these.

The Rubric which directs the repelling from this sacrament does not invest each private minister with an improper degree of authority, if it be considered in all its parts, namely, that no person, however notoriously wicked, shall be withheld from the Communion, till he be admonished to withdraw himself; and then should he, on obstinately persisting, be repelled, it is only till such time as the advice of the Ordinary can be had therein, to whom the curate is obliged to give early notice of the matter. Yet it will greatly concern him to act with the utmost care, fidelity, and circumspection, that he do not either deprive any persons of the privilege of Christian communion, or set upon them such a public mark of infamy and disgrace as a repelling from this sacrament is commonly held to be, without a real necessity to justify his conduct therein.

The communion-table was not always so called; the name of Alter was applied to it by Christian writers during the three first centuries; afterwards both names came to be promiscuously used; the one having respect to the oblation, the other to the participation of the Lord's Supper. The name, however, is immaterial, since this sacrament is considered by our Church as a spiritual sacrifice of commemoration, conveying to the soul of the believer the highest benefits of Divine grace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER is a fit introduction to the Communion; for this divine prayer and this holy sacrament had one and the same Author. The primitive Church therefore always used it thus; whence St. Jerome, in the fourth century, applies the words

"give us this day our daily bread" to the holy sustenance for the soul provided in this sacrament. The Church has always shown her reverence for this Divine compendium of public prayer, by inserting it in every distinct office of the whole liturgy, that by its perfection she might supply the defects and atone for the imperfections of her own supplications. On this account also, as well as in obedience to our Lord's injunction, who commanded it to be said by his disciples whenever they prayed, she has directed it to be said by the whole congregation, whereas to the other prayers they only answer Amen.

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY is an appropriate introduction to the recital of the commandments. The Israelites were to be purified before the first publication of their law, see Exod. xix. 4; and we must have clean hearts before we are fit to hear it; and as the preparation of the heart is from the Lord, we apply to Him for his sanctifying grace to purify ours, that so we may be qualified for his service and approaching his altar.

The Church shows her usual judgment in the titles of God with which this collect is prefaced; for of all the Divine attributes, there are none so likely to make us afraid, in this our nearest approach to God, of coming with an unclean heart, as his omniscience and omnipotence; these two therefore are set before us in Scripture language to remind us that we come before an Almighty and All-seeing Majesty, so that if any wickedness be but imagined in the heart, desired by the will, or acted by the hand, in the darkest night or most secret corner, it is apparent to Him, and He will condemn us for it, unless we first condemn ourselves.

We are not setting up an ideal standard by praying that we may *perfectly* love God. We cannot love God,

it is true, so much as He deserves ; but if we love Him sincerely, that is accounted perfectly. So long as we remain in the body, it is impossible that we should be altogether free from conscious infirmities or unintentional faults; it is inevitable that doubts, and difficulties, and temptations will present themselves; perhaps even in the more advanced stages of our Christian course, there will arise involuntary impulses to evil ; nevertheless, through faith, through prayer, through the constant vigilance of a Divine principle within, implanted by the grace of God in Baptism, and keeping always alive in us the sense of the Divine presence, the agency of his holy fear and love,—these impulses may be prevented from ever amounting to actual rebellion ; on the contrary, if only we are true and faithful to the indwelling grace of the Spirit of Holiness, we may “keep ourselves, so that the wicked one shall not touch us,” we may war a good warfare, we may “hold fast faith and a good conscience,” unwounded by the voluntary commission of any known sin ; we may mortify through the spirit the deeds of the flesh ; we may watch unto prayer, so that we shall be divinely enabled to resist the incursions of evil,—to give not only no way to sinful impulses, but no indulgence, no resting-place in our affections to sinful thoughts ; but in purity of heart, with fervency of spirit, to live supremely to our God. In a word, we have the strongest scriptural assurances that if we “pray without ceasing,” if we “quench not the spirit,” if we hold fast that which is good, if we abstain from all appearance of evil, “the very God of peace will sanctify us wholly,” and our whole spirit and soul and body will be “preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For, as the Apostle beautifully adds, “Faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it.” This perfection is spoken of in Hebrews

vi. 1, and to this state of Christian maturity we are graciously invited in various parts of God's holy word.

Much benefit is derivable from the rehearsal of the commandments here, and the supplications of the people subjoined to each, in two respects; 1st, with particular regard to the Communion, and next with a general regard to their intrinsic use. As to the Communion; it is an excellent preparation for receiving those holy mysteries, and furnishes a beautiful illustration of the "law being our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," not only from its containing those heads of examination which the Church directs, in her Exhortation for the worthy partaking of it, but also, as the keeping of these commandments is one of the three things which we did promise and vow in our Baptism, the hearing of them must be of use when we are going to renew that vow in the Lord's Supper; and where could the Law be placed in our service more conveniently than immediately before the Gospel, to make that more welcome to us, when the Law had humbled us by its terrors? 2nd, The recital of the commandments is of general advantage to Christians, as it reprints them on the memory, which otherwise would be effaced by the impression of worldly affairs.

During the rehearsal of them, the minister is to turn himself to the people and repeat them with due deliberation, in a manner suitable to the importance of the subject, and the dignity of Him whose commandments they are; pausing between them, to give the people sufficient time to beg pardon for their transgressions. He is not to pronounce them in the same tone of voice with the other parts of the service, much less after the same manner as the prayers, but making such difference that the people may know and be sensible that he is speaking to them in the name

of God, and delivering to them a summary of that duty upon the performance of which their eternal salvation depends.

The people are to receive them with equal reverence and humility, as if God was speaking them from Mount Sinai ; and, because we have offended against them all, should kneel down as criminals ought to do, and diligently consider, as God's Ambassador reads them, what they have done against each commandment. They must not, even mentally, repeat them together with the minister ; much less must they mutter them over aloud, and thereby disturb each other, but attend to them, as spoken by the minister, with an awful silence, and at the end of each commandment earnestly beg God's pardon, and invoke his preventing and assisting grace to enable them to obey his will in future.

For the better understanding of the perfection and latitude of the Moral Law\*, the following rules have been laid down.

1. That the prohibitions of sin contain the commands of the contrary good, and that the commands of any particular good contain the prohibition of the contrary evil, otherwise the number of the precepts would have been too great. For example, God in the 3rd commandment, forbids the taking of his name in vain ; therefore, by consequence, the hallowing and sanctifying his name is therein commanded. The 4th requires the sanctifying of the Sabbath-day ; therefore it follows that the profanation of it is thereby forbidden. The 5th commands us to honour our parents ; therefore it forbids us to be disobedient or injurious to them.

\* For the sake of brevity, I have omitted entering more fully on the subject of the moral law, as an explanation of it is to be found in many approved Catechisms.

2. Under the name of any particular sin, all sins of the kind are forbidden.

3. All the inducements and occasions of sin are to be avoided. Things that come near a violation of the law must be shunned. Thus the Jewish doctors used to say, "The hedge or fence of the Law must not be broken. They who always go as far as they may, are often tempted to go further."

4. The Law not only restrains external actions, but regulates our immost thoughts; it has this prerogative above all human laws, that it reaches the heart, and all the motions of it. God alone, whose Law this is, can read our secret desires and imaginations, and He alone is able to punish all such as offend even in thought, and the heart is the spring from which all evil proceeds; from it, according to our Saviour's declaration, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies.

We next pray FOR THE SOVEREIGN, though having done so in the Morning Prayer. This was formerly a distinct office, used some hours after morning prayer \*, and it is right here to do so, after the commandments, as his authority is their support, as they are of that in return; and before the daily collect, that when we have prayed for outward prosperity in the Church, the consequence of the sovereign's welfare, we may, in the collect, pray for inward grace to make it completely happy. Two forms are here inserted; in the latter we pray exclusively for the sovereign, in the former for both sovereign and people, that is for the whole Church. A phrase occurs in it, namely, *in thee and for thee*. We pray that we may obey the king in the Lord, "namely, so far as his commands do not contradict God's will; and that we may obey him for the Lord," that is, for his sake, on

\* See page 74.

a principle of duty, as he has God's authority, and is his vicegerent.

The reading of THE EPISTLE AND GOSPEL before the Communion is an ancient practice. The Jews read the history of their deliverance from Egypt before the passover; and all the ancient fathers and liturgies state that the Christians read select portions of the New Testament before the Communion. Those we use are the most practical parts of the New Testament, and have been in use in the Church for 1400 years. There is a difference in the posture of the congregation during the reading of the Epistle and that of the Gospel. They sit during the former, and stand during the latter, and this to manifest their reverence for the Master above his messengers, a custom useful against Arians, and all others who would derogate from the honour of our Lord. Not that there is any higher authority attached to the Gospels than to the Epistles, for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The ascription of "Glory to God" before the reading of the Gospel is an ancient custom, being found in St. Chrysostom's liturgy. In the first Prayer Book of Edward the Sixth, it was appointed to be said, and has been omitted in ours, most probably by the printer's negligence.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### COMMUNION SERVICE,—CONTINUED.

#### THE CREED TO THE INVITATION.

BESIDES the general reasons for repeating THE CREED, we have special grounds for rehearsing our faith before receiving the Communion. It is meet that all should

profess the same faith who partake of the same mysteries : for surely if no stranger or uncircumcised person could eat of the passover, that typical sacrament (Exod. xii. 43, 48), much more no stranger to the Christian faith, nor unbeliever, should partake of the real sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; and 2ndly, as the acknowledgment of the articles of the Christian faith is part of the vows made at our Baptism, so ought the acknowledgment to be repeated at the Lord's Supper, wherein we renew that vow. Besides, no one should suppose that repeating the creed is ~~merely~~ a declaration of his faith to the rest of the congregation, for it is also a most solemn act of worship, in which we honour and magnify God, both for what He is in himself, and for what He hath done for us. Let us all then, sensible of this, repeat it with reverential voice and gesture, and lift up our hearts with faith, thankfulness, and humble devotion, whenever we say, "I believe," &c. ; and whilst we repeat these articles with our lips, let us resolve to show forth in our lives that we do sincerely believe them, by strictly living according to them. The particular creed used here, more largely condemns all heresies than the Apostles' creed, and is therefore more suitable to show that all the communicants are free from heresy and in the strictest union with the Catholic Church.

The enlargement of the creed did not arise from the Church having enlarged her faith, although it has been falsely ascribed to this ; the reverse is fact. *The heretics explained away what before was not doubted, upon which the Church only asserted her former belief in plainer terms\**. The meaning of the three creeds, and indeed of all creeds that can be composed on Gospel principles, is nothing more than a declaration

\* See page 155.

of the sense in which we accept the profession made in Baptism. By Baptism we are admitted into the Church of Christ; by the command of Christ, we are "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is the condition by which alone we can partake of the Christian covenant; this is the mark by which alone we can be distinguished from the professors of every other religion upon earth. When we repeat a creed, therefore, we do no more than declare our repeated assent to the conditions of the baptismal covenant, and it would be sufficient to do this in the words that Christ enjoins, "I believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," if explanations had not been demanded, to show what we mean by this declaration. Creeds, then, do not, properly speaking, contain articles of faith, but an explanation of the sense in which we understand the primary position of our religion; and this view of the matter will show us the reason why no creed is prescribed in Scripture; why creeds ever have been, and ever must be, the composition of men.

#### PARAPHRASE ON THE NICENE \* CREED.

I confess with my mouth and believe with my heart in *one* God, (not only in opposition to the error of the Gentiles, who held that there were *more* than one God, but also to the calumny of heretics who called the Catholics worshippers not of one but of three Gods,) a pure and infinite Spirit, distinguished into three Persons, the first of which is God the Father Almighty, who is the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things contained in either of them, both visible and bodily substances here on earth, and invisible or spiritual substances which are in heaven.

\* See page 154.

And I also believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, (in opposition to those who said that the human and divine nature of our Saviour, which they called Jesus and Christ, were two persons not united,) the second Person of the glorious Trinity, not the adopted but the only begotten Son of God, not created in time, but begotten of his Father from all eternity, before all worlds, of the same nature with the Father, God begotten of God after a wonderful manner, as light is kindled of light, being very God of very God : he was begotten by eternal generation, not made as the creatures were, being of one nature and substance with the Father; and equal to Him in dignity and power ; for He (the same Lord Jesus Christ) is that eternal Word by whom all things were made out of nothing ; yea, I believe it is he who for us men and our salvation, when we were fallen into a deplorable state of sin and misery, came down from heaven to this earth, left his glory, and was incarnate, assuming a body of flesh like ours, only it had no sin, because it was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, so that though he remained very God still, yet he took on him our nature and was made man, being both God and man in one person : he taught us by his precepts, and led us by his example while he lived, and at last he suffered, and was crucified also, enduring that painful and shameful death to satisfy God's justice for us, who were liable to suffer eternal death ; and though as to himself he was innocent, yet he was condemned unjustly to this, under Pontius Pilate, the Roman president of Judea, and he suffered it with admirable patience till he died in those torments, and was buried ; yet, when he had paid the full price of our sins, upon the third day after his crucifixion, he rose again to life, according to what was prophesied in the

Scriptures of the Old Testament, and declared to be fulfilled in the New. After this he conversed forty days with his disciples, and then ascended in their sight into heaven, where he is restored to all his glory; and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us; and he shall come again from hence at the end of the world, with glory and great majesty, to judge all mankind, both the quick and the dead, according to their works, condemning the wicked to endless torments, and advancing the righteous to reign in glory with this their Saviour, whose natural and essential kingdom shall have no end, though at the end of the world he will give up his mediatorial kingdom.

And I believe also in the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the glorious Trinity, who is very God, the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and the Giver of spiritual life and sanctifying grace, 2 Cor. iii. 6, who is not begotten as the Son, but proceedeth (John xiv. 26, xv. 26, and xvi. 7,) from the Father and the Son, yet is not less in dignity; for it is he who, with the Father and Son together, in all offices of the Church is worshipped and glorified, and who spake by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New: and finally I believe the whole body of Christians, holding the right faith, do make one catholic, universal, true, and apostolic Church, in which blessed society I acknowledge there are many privileges, namely, one baptism instituted by Christ for the remission of sins (that most important of the benefits of the new covenant), provided we do not forfeit our title by infidelity or disobedience; and I, as a member of this society, look for and expect my body, though corrupted in the grave, shall be restored to life in the resurrection of the dead; and I hope then for a portion in the glory and the life everlasting which Christ hath promised to all his servants in his kingdom of the world to

come; and oh that it may be to me according to my faith! Amen\*.

There is a direction that “the Curate shall declare unto the people what holydays or fasting days are in the week following to be observed,” the design of which at first was lest they should observe any such days as had formerly been kept, but were laid aside at the Reformation. Though this danger is pretty well over, there being no fear of the people’s observing superstitious holydays, yet there is still as much reason for keeping up the rubric, since now they are run into a contrary extreme, and regard no holydays at all; which makes it fit that the Curate should tell them before hand what holydays will occur, and then leave it to the people to answer for the neglect, if they pass them over without due regard.

THE SERMON, in ancient times, was usually an exposition, not above an hour in length, of the Epistle, or Gospel, or proper lesson for the day, according to the pattern in Neh. viii. 8. This practice, which fell into disuse during the tyranny of Popery, was revived by the Reformers, and is a very beneficial mode of preaching to ordinary congregations. The preacher was, in his exposition, to observe the Catholic interpretation of the Church, as we see in the Nineteenth Canon of the Council of Constantinople, to which agrees the following canon made in Queen Elizabeth’s time: “The preachers chiefly shall take heed that they teach nothing in their preaching, which they would have the people religiously to observe and believe, but that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old Testament and the New, and that which the Catholic fathers, and ancient bishops, have gathered out of that doctrine.”

\* A brief summary of the proofs of our Saviour’s divinity will be found in GREER’s *Epitome of the General Councils*, 4th century, which likewise exhibits the variations in the belief of Unitarians, as deduced from their own lately-given evidence.

These golden canons, had they been duly observed, would have been a great preservative of truth and the Church's peace. As to the preaching used in our Church, if we consider either the excellency or the frequency of it, we may justly affirm that if any Church under heaven "hath wherewithal to glory in this behalf," our Church "hath much more." As to the excellency of it, this praise has been long yielded to our clergy, both at home and from abroad, by the universal voice of Protestants and of Romanists, and as to the frequency of the word preached, this provision of our Church, which appoints a sermon once on the Lord's day, must appear sufficient, yea, abundant, if we look back to the scarcity of it in the days of the Reformation, when the provision of a sermon quarterly, as made in Edward the Sixth's time, and for many years after but monthly, according to an injunction of Queen Elizabeth; wherefore this present provision of our Church, in appointing one sermon on the Sundays, ought to be received with all thankfulness, and in truth, a greater plenty than this may turn not perhaps to our nourishment, but only create in us a waste and wantonness. Far be it from me to discourage or straiten the ordinance of preaching; but God forbid that the enlarging of that should ever straiten the ordinances of Divine worship, or be esteemed before them! God forbid that in the Church of England, the sermon, how excellent soever, should be valued before the service, which is incomparable! For to what end do we come to the house of prayer? Is it to adore God or to admire men? Is it to praise Him for the excellency of his goodness, or them for the excellency of their talents? Did this plenteous provision of preaching be ever again exalted and abused, to the neglecting, displacing, and disparaging of public worship, as it was before the Great Rebellion, it will

provoke God to take it again from us. It was a remarkable saying, founded on the judgments of God, that a Church, which places its religion in preaching, shall never stand \*.

At the beginning of the Reformation, the clergy were exceedingly illiterate, and it was suspected that some still favoured the Church of Rome. Therefore, to supply the defects of some, and to oblige the rest to teach according to the form of sound doctrine, two books of Homilies, or plain sermons, were prepared, the first written by Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Thomas Becon †, one of Cranmer's chaplains; the

\* "The Church, in her best of times, never made, as we too many of us make, the preaching of man the first of her objects ; she rested most on prayer ; and, as in all other cases, what she received from the authority of her first teachers, and naturally adopted by the instinct of her own pure spirit, was also most consistent with reason. Even as an instrument of christianizing man, prayer is in some respects better than preaching : prayer requires the active exertion of our own minds—preaching places us at our ease, to be moulded and fashioned by an outward influence. Preaching fixes our thoughts on man—prayer upon God. Preaching may make us vain, conceited, and judges of our teachers ; prayer leaves us humble and contrite. We sit during the one, we *kneel* at the other. Preaching is not certain in its effects, and its power in *human* words—prayer never can fail, and the answer to it is always at hand. Preaching is the help of ignorance—prayer, the exercise of faith. Preaching may come home to our hearts—prayer takes us from our hearts into a better world and better thoughts. Preaching may bless ourselves—prayer is the means of blessing thousands."—*Quarterly Review*.

"Solemn public worship is as much a Divine ordinance as preaching ; in the one we hold awful converse with God, and in the other we have the message from heaven delivered to us. One in a measure depends upon the other ; it is only devout and earnest prayer that can fix the heart to receive the truth profitably. God's blessing upon his word preached will be withheld from all those who do not seek it in constant prayer, and without that blessing, and without the assistance and teaching of his Holy Spirit, what is the most eloquent discourse but 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal ?' \* \* \* \* We shall hear the preaching of the cross with a careless, unhumbled, unprofitable ear, unless we devoutly join in those spiritual services which prepare the way for its reception."—*CLOSE's Sermons*.

† See *Sketch of the Reformation in England*, by Rev. J. J. BLUNT.

seconded by several bishops in Queen Elizabeth's time, principally by Jewel; and the parochial clergy were commanded to read them in the churches. The design of them was to mix speculative points with practical matters; some explain the doctrine, and others enforce the rule of life. They are chiefly calculated to possess the nation with a sense of the purity of the Gospel in opposition to the corruptions of Popery, and to reform them from the crying sins which had been connived at under Popery, while men knew the price of them, how to compensate for them, and to redeem themselves from the guilt of them by masses and sacraments, by indulgences and absolutions. When compared with the age in which they were written, they may be considered extraordinary compositions, and though, perhaps, every argument and expression in them, is not to be approved, yet they contain, in general, many wholesome lessons for the people. Although from the change in our language, they would now be scarcely understood by a common congregation, and the reading of them has in consequence fallen into disuse with the tacit permission of the governors of the Church, yet the clergy may study them with advantage, and transfer part of them into their sermons, with such alterations as change of circumstances may render expedient. There is no sanction for the title commonly assigned them, "*Homilies of the Church of England.*" The misnomer, besides, is not trifling, as it leads to the supposition that they are authoritative documents of the Church, whereas they are merely sermons to be read, as will appear from the following considerations:—To the LITURGY, all beneficed clergymen within a limited period after institution or collation, openly and publicly, before the congregation in which they have been appointed ministers, declare unfeigned assent and consent. To the ARTICLES, the

clergy are obliged, at various times, and on different occasions, solemnly to subscribe. As to the Homilies, on the other hand, venerable and valuable as they are, no promise is made for their being signed, subscribed, or openly assented to, but only a limited and guarded assertion respecting them in the thirty-fifth Article, that they "contain a goodly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times :" meaning the times in which they were published.

Before the sermon, the minister is directed by the fifty-fifth Canon (English), to move the people to join with him in a short form of prayer. This was more particularly needful in past ages, when the sermons were commonly at a different hour from the liturgy. The original mode of performing this part of the priest's office was by "bidding," that is, inviting and exhorting, the people to pray for the several particulars mentioned by him. In course of time, however, a collect, appropriate to that part of the service, has been commonly substituted by the clergy for the bidding or hortatory form. It has been lately asserted that the canon above-mentioned, sanctions an extemporaneous prayer at this time; a learned prelate, however, has satisfactorily proved, by an examination of the canon, by tracing it from its origin, by analysing its contents, by stating various circumstances attending its publication, and by citing the opinions entertained of it by the earliest and best ecclesiastical authorities, that no such practice is authorised by the canon, but contrarywise, inasmuch as it not only marks out the subject in which the minister is to call upon the people to join him in prayer, *but furnishes also the form of words.*

The sentences read by the minister, whilst the alms and offerings are collecting, is called THE OFFERTORY. The custom of making oblations at the communion is apostolical : "On the first day of the week,

let every one lay by him in store as God has prospered him," 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Christ gave his alms at the pass-over, John xiii. 29, and supposes that we will never come without a gift to the altar, Matt. v. 23. The first Christians gave all they had when they communicated, and the custom continued down to following ages. Out of these offerings, which were not always in money, but in bread, corn, wine, &c., (and which were never accepted from persons under public infamy, by reason of their misconduct,) a portion was devoutly placed on the altar for the celebration of the holy feast; the remainder was intrusted to the bishop of the diocese, to be dispensed at his discretion. The Sentences may be divided into those which excite us to promote the spiritual, and into those which promote the temporal good of our brethren, by both which ways we should express our love for them, particularly when we commemorate our Redeemer's dying love to us all. To the former belong those which require that they who are able should contribute to the maintenance of a gospel ministry, when it wants their help. They are seldom read by the clergy, that they may not seem to plead their own cause, except in some few churches, where the primitive practice, needful in too many more, of giving oblations to the minister as well as alms to the poor, at the communion, is preserved or restored. The rest of the sentences exhort to the latter duty, of relieving the sick and needy. What is generally given for them on this occasion must be considered not as the whole, but a sample and earnest of our charity, and a small one, it is to be hoped, in comparison of what we give at other times.

The persons who collect the alms should not place them on the communion-table. "The deacons (whose office was at first instituted for this purpose), church-

wardens, or other fit persons, shall receive the alms for the poor, and other devotions of the people, (meaning, probably, by the latter, the contributions for the clergy,) and reverently bring them to the priest, who shall humbly present and place them upon the holy table," in conformity to the practice of the ancient Jews, who, when they brought their gifts and sacrifices to the temple, offered them to God by the hands of the priest.

By the oblations in the PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH MILITANT, is meant the elements of bread and wine, which the priest is to offer solemnly to God, as an acknowledgment of his sovereignty over his creatures; and that from henceforth they might become peculiarly his. In all the Jewish sacrifices, of which the people were partakers, the materials of the feast were first made God's by a solemn oblation, and then afterwards eaten by the communicants, not as man's, but as God's provision; who, by thus entertaining them at his own table, declared himself reconciled and again in covenant with them, and therefore our blessed Saviour, when he instituted the sacrifice of his own body and blood, first gave thanks and blessed the elements, that is, offered them to God as Lord of the creatures, as the most ancient fathers expound the passage, who, for that reason, whenever they celebrated the eucharist, always offered the bread and wine for it to God upon the altar, by this, or some such short ejaculation, "Lord, we offer thee thine own out of what thou hast so bountifully given us" (which is done this day in the office of the Episcopal Church of Scotland). In the ancient Church, they had generally a side table near the altar, upon which the elements were laid till the first part of the communion-service was over, at which the catechumens were allowed to be present; but when they were gone, the elements were removed and placed

upon the altar itself with a solemn prayer. Although no side table is authorized by our Church, there is a rubric directing the priest to place the bread and wine upon the table immediately after he has placed the alms. The custom which prevails of a clerk or sexton putting them upon the Lord's table before the beginning of morning prayer, is highly unbecoming.

The whole number of the faithful is usually divided into two parts, namely, the Church militant, and the Church triumphant. By the Church *militant*, or, in a state of warfare, we mean those Christians who are alive, and perpetually harassed with the temptations and assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and whose life is, consequently, a continual warfare under the banner of our blessed Saviour. By the Church *triumphant* we mean those Christians who have departed this life in God's true faith and fear, and who now enjoy, in some measure, and after the day of judgment shall be fully possessed of, that glory and triumph which is the fruit of their labours, and the munificent gift bestowed for their victories over their spiritual adversaries during the time of their trial and combat here upon earth. The prayer for the Church militant is composed upon the principles laid down by St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, and accordingly consists of prayers, supplications, and intercessions, for the whole Catholic Church; beseeches God to inspire it with the spirit of truth and concord, and that the individual members may live together in unity and charity. It then prays more distinctly for the different orders of which the Church is composed; first for the higher estates, next for the clergy, and lastly for the people, that they may all with sincerity and fidelity discharge the duties allotted to their respective stations. The conclusion contains a thanksgiving for deceased members, with a petition that the living may follow

their good examples, and be finally partakers of the same inheritance of everlasting life and glory. I will explain the following terms:—

*Indifferently*: the primary signification of the word, in which it is used here, is without any respect of persons, without preference. *Curates*: priests and deacons to whom the bishops commit the care of particular congregations. See Morning Prayer. *Rightly and duly*: rightly, according to our Lord's institution; and duly, as the necessities of the Church require.

The prayer differs from that in the Romish ritual in the omission of prayers for the dead\*, because they have no ground in Scripture. It has restored the thanksgiving for the faithful departed, and ends with the usual conclusion of all our prayers, whereas the Church of Rome has thrust in the names of the blessed Virgin and other saints, through whose merits and prayers they intercede even in this place where there is a lively commemoration of the death of Christ our only Mediator: which intimates that to plead in virtue of our Lord's passion is not sufficient, and that that intercession, by which the holy Virgin and all other saints became accepted by God, was not alone forcible enough. But we desire no other Mediator, nor need any other Advocate, but our Lord Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

\* The primitive Church had, it must be admitted, such prayers, arising from the persuasion, that the interval between death and the end of the world is a state of expectation and imperfect bliss, in which the souls of the righteous wait for the completion of their happiness at the consummation of all things. They designed to testify their love and respect for the departed, declare their belief in the communion of saints, and keep up in themselves a lively sense of the soul's immortality. In comparatively modern times, the practice was corrupted and used as an argument by the Church of Rome for their fabled purgatory, and masses for souls detained there, and was consequently laid aside. The prayers in the primitive Church were of quite a contrary nature, being for patriarchs and prophets who, by the confession of all sides, never were in purgatory, nor is there a single expression in them, praying for delivery of souls out of that imaginary state.

There is much propriety in giving **WARNING OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION**: great mysteries ought to have great preparation. The Paschal Lamb (a type of Christ in this sacrament) was to be kept and chosen four days before it was slain, Exod. xii. 3, 6. God gave the Israelites three days notice of his intention of publishing the law, Exod. xix. 15, and ordered proclamation of their festivals some time before, Lev. xxv. 9. Hezekiah gave notice of his intended passover a good while before the celebration of it, 2 Chron. xxx. But we have a higher mystery to perform, and do it now so seldom, and are so unprepared for it, that it is necessary to give us a longer time before it, and to dispose our souls for the worthy receiving thereof. The ancient Church indeed had no such exhortations, for their daily, or weekly communions made it known that there was then no solemn assembly of Christians without it, and every one (not under censure) was expected to communicate. But now, when the time is somewhat uncertain, and our omissions have made some of us ignorant, and others forgetful of this duty, most of us unwilling, and all of us more or less indisposed for it; it was thought both prudent and necessary to provide exhortations for the minister to read, when he gives warning of the communion, which he is always to do upon the Sunday, or some holyday immediately preceding.

Both minister and people have their respective duty with regard to these exhortations. The minister, considering how many poor Christians there are who have little or no means of coming to the knowledge of this ordinance, and the manner of preparing themselves for it, but by what they learn from hearing these exhortations, should think himself bound in conscience, and as he values the edification of his flock, to read them with the greatest deliberation and seri-

ousness, and with an affection that shall even force the attention of his hearers. The people should carefully attend, that they might learn what it is their duty to do, in order to be worthy communicants, and they will do well to read them over again when they return home, that they may fix them in their memory, and that they may be a standing rule to go by in their whole life.

Two things are recommended to our attention, in **THE FIRST EXHORTATION**, "in the mean season," before the celebration of the communion. The *first* is, consideration of the dignity of it, which St. Paul calls "discerning the Lord's body," 1 Cor. xi. 29, that is, making much difference between this and our ordinary food. The *second* is that which St. Paul and we both call "examination," 1 Cor. xi. 28, and these are no more than what every prudent man does before he sets out upon any great affair. First, he surveys the nature of the work, and next he examines his own fitness to undertake it. Thus must we consider the dignity of this holy mystery, to make us full of desires, and humble; and the danger, to put us upon the strictest care and preparation. Our next duty is to search and try how we are fitted for it, and we must not only admire the guest, but prepare and cleanse the heart for his reception.

Self-examination is a duty more than usually needful when we purpose to receive the holy communion. It is hypocrisy to seek a pardon for sins which we never perceive ourselves guilty of, and foolish presumption to make a covenant before we have weighed the conditions to which we are obliged. Until we see the number, and apprehend the heinousness of our transgressions, and fear the vengeance due unto us for them, we are altogether unfit for the commemoration of *His* death, who suffered for our offences. It is the sight and sense of sin alone that will show us what need we

have of so glorious a Redeemer. This will show us our obligation to Jesus, and teach us heartily to praise God for him, and earnestly beg an interest in him; whilst he that does not discern his guilt, or foresees his danger, is stupid and unmoved at this amazing spectacle of a bleeding dying Saviour, and hath no love, no fear, no tears or desires, no relenting and indignation for what is past, nor any vows and wishes for the time to come, and shall be judged an unworthy receiver.

The absolution mentioned in the latter part of that exhortation is not of the same nature as that in the Romish Church; *our Church does not*, like the Romish, *affirm it to be necessary for all persons, but only advisable for some*; it is therefore only a declaration of the minister's judgment, a fallible one indeed, but the proper and appointed one, that if the person's case be truly represented, he is pardoned and absolved by our heavenly Father, who alone can forgive sin; and such credit only is due to this declaration, as in other affairs we allow to authorized professors and practitioners of skill and probity: whose opinions we often think it prudent to ask, and are happy to have in our favour; and God forbid that we should not give you ours when we are asked it, with as much fidelity, and as much secrecy, as any ministers of any Church whatever!

THE SECOND EXHORTATION which the minister is to use, instead of the former, in case he shall see the people negligent to come, is 1st, a declaration of the time when the communion is to be celebrated; 2nd, an invitation to all that are present to come; 3rd, the arguments to move them to it, which are as follows; a plain similitude from the guests invited by a man to a costly feast ungratefully refusing to come: for if this would displease us, much more must our withdrawing from this Sacrament provoke God.—The frivolousness of the pretences which men make to excuse their

staying away, namely, that they are busy and cannot, or sinful, and dare not come, both these being very base and vain in God's sight.—The example of those who were invited to the feast in the Gospel, and made such kind of excuses, yet were justly condemned: We apply all by showing our care in providing this heavenly feast; our desire that all may come; their duty to come in thankfulness to Christ; their danger if they wilfully stay away; since it is likely they will be severely punished for so great a sin against God, and so foul a scandal to their brethren; and we conclude with hopes that they will, and prayers that they may, return to a better mind.

There is also an EXHORTATION AT THE ACTUAL CELEBRATION OF THE COMMUNION\*. As the design of the former was to increase the numbers, this (which we derive from the early Greek Church) is to rectify the dispositions of the communicants. In it the minister excites us to two general duties, self-examination and thanksgiving. He states the benefit of receiving worthily, and the danger of receiving it unworthily. He enforces the duties of true repentance, lively faith, complete reformation, and perfect charity, in order to our becoming meet partakers of these holy mysteries. He insists above all things on the necessity of thanksgiving to God for the redemption by Christ. The concluding paragraphs furnish us with various considerations on which our gratitude may expatiate. If read with serious gratitude and affectionate warmth, nothing can more effectively stir up the devotion of the congregation.

The following expressions in it may need explanation. *For then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood.* “The cup of blessing which we

<sup>By</sup> An account of the apostolical kiss of peace will be found in *Parker, Orig. Liturg.*, vol. ii. chap. 4. sec. II.

bless, is it not the communion (that is, *communication*) of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16; that is, of a saving union with him and of the benefits procured to us by his death; which are forgiveness of sins, Matt. xxvi. 28; increase of the influences of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 13; and everlasting life, John vi. 54, 56.

*Dwell in Christ; continue in obedience to his laws.*

*Christ dwelling in us; the continuance of his favourable presence with us.*

*One with Christ and Christ with us;* in a spiritual sense, we are more and more closely united to our Saviour, even as the members of the body are united to the head; and we receive from Him those spiritual influences and assistances by which our souls are invigorated in holiness, and these are the necessary consequences of the spiritual communion of Christ's body and blood, as it is God's appointed means for the purpose.

Many pious persons are terrified by the word *damnation* applied here to unworthy communicants, which arises from not considering the occasion on which the expression was used by St. Paul. The chapter in which it occurs is levelled against such as, not considering the Lord's body, thought they were met together to regale their bodies, instead of edifying their souls. After setting forth the impiety and danger of this, he adds, "but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." The man who is sensible that he is commemorating the Lord's death, and appropriating the benefits of it to himself, by lively faith in Christ and a true penitent heart, comes worthily, and escapes those dangers meant in these denunciations. The word, besides, which is translated *damnation*, is never used in Scripture to signify exclusively eternal damnation, but only *judg-*

ment or *condemnation* of various sorts on having committed any grievous sin. Accordingly, the condemnation passed by St. Paul against those who so mistook the nature of the Lord's Supper as to suppose it a common feast, wherein they might eat and drink to excess, is exhibited in their after sufferings of weakness, sickness, and even death, (natural consequences indeed of gluttony and drunkenness at all times, but greatly increased under the circumstances,) and in this sense only our liturgy understands the expressions "eating and drinking damnation to ourselves, not discerning the Lord's body," when, it adds, "we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death," having no reference whatever in this place to the idea of *eternal* damnation. It may also be observed, for the comfort of pious persons, having a just sense of their own insufficiency, that St. Paul does not say he that being *unworthy*, (for so all men are,) but he that doeth it *unworthily*, in an unworthy, irreverent, or indecent manner, not becoming so holy an institution, shall receive damnation against himself, not discerning the Lord's body, making no difference between that and common food. *Our* method of celebrating this sacrament shuts out the possibility of such a violation of its solemnity.

This does not give any encouragement, however, to the faithless and unrepenting to be partakers of the Lord's Supper; for though the apostles meant sickness or judgment upon the body, yet it is as certain that whosoever presumes to come without such an honest and good heart as shows itself in a desire to forsake all sin, and to serve and please God in the general course of a sober, virtuous, and godly life, is liable to eternal damnation till he repent of that his presumption, and reform his wicked life. But then it also must be remembered, that they who have not such honest and

good hearts are in a state of damnation whether they come to this sacrament or not; because the sentence of damnation is not inflicted upon such men barely for receiving the sacrament unworthily, but chiefly for living and dying with corrupt hearts; the guilt whereof is indeed aggravated by the presumption and hypocrisy of making open vows of obedience with secret resolutions to continue in disobedience. But as long as the heart of a man is not right in the sight of God, he has nothing to expect but eternal damnation, although he never comes to this sacrament, and moreover, such a heart renders him unfit to serve God with any benefit in any other office of religion whatsoever; nay, even makes his prayer "an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8.

The exhortation of the priest, "*above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God,*" does not mean that faith and repentance are less necessary than thanksgiving; but that these being supposed to precede, the principal point in the act of communicating is a thankful remembrance of God's mercy, disposing us to lay hold of it: and most seasonably does the priest invite us to praise the Lord with him at this time, and calls on us almost in the very words of St Paul, Heb. xiii. 15. We have seen the everlasting love of the Father, the unspeakable kindness of the Son, the incomparable grace of the Holy Ghost, and our own infinite obligations: let us therefore all join in offering up all possible praise and glory, worshipping the holy Trinity with such sincere and hearty thanksgivings, that we may be like the angels, with this only difference, that they openly behold that which we discern by faith; but both they and we "rejoice" in it "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But because when we have done all we can, we shall come far short, we must resolve not only to

make a few praises in this highest part of our devotion; but to perpetuate the duty to our lives' end; striving to imprint the love of the Lord Jesus so deeply on our minds, that the memory of it may never depart from us, but may dispose us to bless the Lord at all times, in all places, and upon all occasions. And further, since no praises of the lips can be sufficient, we are here prescribed another way to make our thanks to be "continual," namely, by glorifying God in our lives; that is, by resigning up ourselves to the disposal of his providence, and by yielding obedience to his commandments. The eucharist is but for an hour; the hymns will soon be over; but by submission and obedience we may glorify our God continually and every moment.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### COMMUNION SERVICE,—CONTINUED.

##### THE INVITATION—TO THE POST COMMUNION.

THE INVITATION consists of three parts; the qualification required in those who are invited, namely, repentance, charity, and holy purposes; the invitation itself, —draw near with faith, that is, not meaning in a bodily, but in a spiritual sense, making a more solemn entrance to God's immediate presence, see Heb. x. 22; and lastly, a direction to make an humble confession.

The people are directed to make this Confession kneeling on their knees, *for they are standing whilst attending to the exhortation and invitation of the minister*; but when about to sue for pardon from the King of Kings, they must do so with reverence and submission, with the most profound humility and devotion. Our voice at the same time should be as humble as

our gesture, not clamorous, so as to disturb any, but sober, so as to excite and animate the devotion of others.

The minister throughout the communion-service is directed to kneel only thrice; at this confession, at the collect before the prayer for consecration, and at the act for receiving. In every other part of the office he is to stand. This was the practice of the ancient Church; and the attitude was probably borrowed from the service of the temple, where the legal sacrifices were offered by the priest standing, for between the legal and evangelical sacrifices there is the same correspondence that exists between the shadow and the substance. The Christian priest offers up the incense of prayers, praises, and alms; the oblation of ourselves, our souls, and bodies; and the memorial of the sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

There is peculiar propriety in the confession of sin at this part of the service. We are coming to the altar to remember Christ's sufferings, and therefore should own our sins which were the causes of them; yea, since we hope to have our pardon sealed, we ought first with shame and sorrow to own the transgressions, for his honour who doth so freely remit them; and this is especially necessary, since the solemn penance\* of so laudable a practice in the primitive Church is laid aside.

I will explain these phrases in the confession: *by thought, word, and deed.* It being impossible to recite all the particulars in which we have sinned, the Church gives us some method for the furtherance of our penitential recollections, by this brief and full division. Solomon tells us that for every "secret thought"—Christ, that for every "idle word"—St. Paul, that for every "evil deed" God will bring us to judgment. Let us therefore prevent that, by com-

\* See Commination Service.

dering and judging ourselves. *Burden of them intolerable.* The weight with which our guilt, if not removed, will finally sit heavy upon our souls, is unspeakably greater than we shall be able to bear.

The Church is right to put into our mouths petitions for grace to amend our lives, in the end of our confession and entreaty for pardon; for otherwise we affront the holiness of God, while we pretend to crave his mercy. He that only desires forgiveness, to be quit of his present fear, is an hypocrite, and doth not hate or grieve for his iniquity, but for the punishment annexed to it; and when that fear ceaseth, he will be as bad as ever. But if we have truly felt the weight of sin, and duly apprehended the misery of having God for our enemy, we shall be desirous to be kept from future sins, as we are to be delivered from our past offences.

THE ABSOLUTION which follows is suitably placed at this part of the service; since God has vested in his ministers a power to support the spirits of dejected penitents, by antedating their pardon in the name of God, there can be no fitter opportunity to exercise it than now, when so many humbled sinners are kneeling before God, and begging forgiveness at his hand. It should, however, be the people's care that their worship be such as the minister believes it to be, and then this absolution of his will be confirmed in the court of heaven. The priest is the person to pronounce the absolution, because to him, and not to the deacon, is given this authority at ordination; unless the bishop be present, and then, for honour's sake, and in token of his spiritual superiority, this act of authority is reserved for him. *Let not any of the people, then, by any means usurp the peculiar office of the priest, and disturb the congregation by repeating it after him; but let them all beg of God to confirm what the priest pronounces, by adding to it a decent and hearty Amen.*

The three forms of absolution in our liturgy, namely, that in the morning service, that at the visitation of the sick, and that at the communion, are in sense and virtue the same. When a prince hath granted a commission to any servant of his, to release out of prison all penitent offenders whatsoever, it were all one in effect as to the prisoners' discharge, whether this servant says, By virtue of a commission granted to me, under the prince's hand and seal, I release this prisoner; or thus, The prince who hath given me this commission, he pardons you; or lastly, The prince pardon and deliver you, the prince then standing by, and confirming the word of his servant; so it is all one as to the remission of sins in the penitent, whether the priest absolves him in this form,—Almighty God, who hath given me and all priests power to pronounce pardon to the penitent, "he pardons you;" or thus, By virtue of a commission granted to me from God, "I absolve you;" or lastly, "God pardon you," namely, by me his servant, according to his promise, "whose sins ye remit, they are remitted." All these are but several expressions of the same thing, and are effectual to the penitent by virtue of that commission mentioned in St. John xx. 23; which commission, in two of these forms, is expressed, and in the last, namely, that at the communion, is sufficiently implied and supposed. For the priest is directed, in using this form, "to stand up and turn to the people," which behaviour certainly signifies more than a bare prayer for the people. This gesture of standing and turning to the people signifies a message of God to them by the mouth of his priest, a part of his ministry of reconciliation, a solemn application of pardon to the penitent by God's minister, and is in sense thus much, "Almighty God pardon you by me." These different forms of absolution then sometimes express, and always

includes; God's commission; and in whichever of them it be pronounced, it is in substance the same; an act of authority, by virtue of Christ's commission, effectual to the remission of sins in the penitent.

THE SENTENCES WHICH FOLLOW are promises of Scripture, on which the foregoing absolution is founded, chosen to confirm the faith and revive the hope of the penitents, by taking away all unreasonable fears and doubts of God's gracious pardon and acceptance. The Versicles, which occur next, beginning " Lift up your hearts," to the end of the hymn, called in the Greek Church *Trisagium*, and in the Latin *Tersanctus*, from the word "holy" being thrice repeated, have been used in the communion-service of the English Church for 1600 years, and probably descended from apostolic times.

We presume that the heavenly choir join with us when we repeat the Trisagium, as Isaiah describes it to have been chanted by them before the throne of glory, Isa. vi. 3; and the early Christians believed that angels were present in their religious assemblies, 1 Cor. xi. 10; and that they desired especially to look into these mysteries, 1 Pet. i. 12. Considering also, that this hymn plainly declares the Trinity the peculiar doctrine of Christians, they did therefore take this hymn into the office for this sacrament, believing it fit for angels and men to join in this heavenly song over the memorial of our redemption; and surely it is most proper, that as every person in the Trinity concurred for our redemption, so every one should be adored in the memorial thereof. The Father is Holy, who gave us such a Saviour; the Son is Holy, who effected this salvation; and the Spirit is Holy, who sanctifieth us by virtue thereof; and yet these three are one Lord, to whom it is just that we should, with the most fervent gratitude, offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

PROPER PREFACES are appointed for the principal festivals, that, by the repetition of the signal mercies then commemorated, they might make the deeper impression, and be better remembered. These prefaces are very ancient. Some had been in later times added to them by the Romish Church, relating to saints, but they were expunged by our Reformers, who have only retained five, and these upon the principal festivals which relate to the persons of the Trinity, and not to any saint. The reason of their being fixed to eight days, is taken from the practice of the Jews, who by God's appointment observed their greater festivals some of them for seven, and one, namely, the feast of tabernacles, for eight days; and therefore the primitive Church, thinking that the observation of Christian festivals (of which the Jewish feasts were only types and shadows) ought not to come short of them, lengthened out their higher feasts to eight days.

The design of THE PRAYER AFTER THESE PREFACES and before the prayer of consecration, beginning "We do not presume, &c.," is, that by this act of humility, to allay our exultations, which otherwise might savour of too much confidence. In it the minister acknowledges his own and the communicants' unworthiness, and God's unmerited kindness in admitting them to his table; and each should make this humble form his own by attending to it devoutly. The happy union of Christian lowliness with Christian exaltation, presented to our minds and hearts in this part of the office, is everywhere to be met with in the New Testament. With what mingled emotions, therefore, of faith and fear, of prostrate, at once, and of uplifted adoration, should we approach the house, the services, the altar of God? With what holy, humble zeal should we not learn from our Church services

“to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before Him with reverence?”

The expressions “That our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood,” have been censured, thinking that by them was implied, that each of these, at least the latter, his blood, had some peculiar efficacy, of which the other was destitute. This cannot, however, be intended; because, soon after, the preservation of our bodies and souls also “unto everlasting life” is ascribed separately, both to his body and blood; and it is in Scripture also, Heb. x. 10, 19. Therefore this distinction made here was only meant for some kind of elegance of speech; and it much resembles what St. Clement, the Roman, whom St. Paul entitles “his fellow-labourer,” Phil. iv. 3, says, that “Christ gave his flesh for our flesh, and his soul for our souls.”

The priest stands in a different position as regards the people, than what he does in the Romish Church, during THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION: in the latter he stands in such a manner as to prevent the people from being eye-witnesses of the operation in the working of the pretended miracle: our Church, that pretends no such miracle, enjoins the direct contrary, by ordering the priest so to “order the bread and wine, that he may with more readiness and decency break the bread and take the cup into his hands *before* the people.”

There is manifest propriety in the consecration of the elements. We do not eat our common food without first praying for a blessing upon it; how much more then are we obliged, before we eat and drink this bread and wine, by which Christ designed to set forth the mystery of his death, to consecrate it and set it apart by a solemn prayer, especially since Christ himself, in the institution of this holy ordi-

mance, whilst he was teaching his apostles how to celebrate it, did use a form of blessing over it, Matt. xxvi. 26, which St. Paul calls "giving thanks," 1 Cor. xi. 24. Wherefore all the churches in the world, from the apostles' days, have used such a form, the ancient and essential part of which is the words of our Saviour's institution; for since he makes this sacramental change, it hath been thought fit by all churches to keep his own words, which, being pronounced by a lawful priest, do properly make the consecration, of which accordingly the prayer of consecration in our Church consists, with a proper prayer to introduce it.

Our Church differs from the Romish, and also from the Lutherans and Calvinists, respecting the consecration of the eucharist. Our Church, in conformity with the sense of the ancient Church of Christ, ascribes their consecration in this sacrament, as also of the water in the other sacrament of Baptism, to the prayer of the faithful offered by the priest, and to the words of the institution repeated by him. The others ascribe it to the bare repeating of the words "This is my body," &c.

Christ has, by his one oblation of himself, once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: the death of Christ, if we regard the persons for whom it was undergone, is a "sacrifice;" if we regard him who offered it, it is a "free oblation;" if we consider Him to whom it was offered, it is a "satisfaction;" and in every one of these respects it is "full, perfect, and sufficient;" or particularly, it is a full satisfaction, a perfect oblation, and a sufficient sacrifice,—not like the legal offerings, for the sins of one kind, or the offence of one nation or of one person, but for the sins of all the world. Let none suppose that we are about

to sacrifice Christ again, (as the Romish Church falsely teaches its priests to think they do every time they say mass, as properly and truly as he offered himself in his sacrifice upon the cross,) for that is not only needless and impossible, but a plain contradiction to St. Paul, who affirms that Jesus was offered only once, Heb. ix. 26; x. 10, 12; and by that “one oblation he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” v. 14, so that there needs “no more sacrifice for sin,” v. 18.

The expression that we may be “partakers of his most blessed body and blood” is proper, for though the bread and wine do not cease to be what they were before, yet to the worthy receiver they become something far more excellent; become visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace; and do not merely figure to us the breaking of Christ’s body, and the shedding of his blood, but are a pledge of that inward and spiritual grace which they represent. What that grace is, we are taught in the Catechism; that it is the body and blood of Christ, that are “verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper;” that is, they have a real part and portion given them in the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, whose body was broken, and blood shed, for remission of sins. They truly and indeed, partake of the virtue of his bloody sacrifice, whereby he hath obtained an eternal redemption for us. This is the meaning of partaking of his body and blood, which are here communicated.

The utensils that hold the elements are the “paten,” or plate on which the bread is laid; the “chalice,” the cup from which the communicants drink; and the “flagon,” the larger vessel, which contains the larger quantity of wine to be consecrated.

The phrase “shed for many” means the same

as "for all," as in Roma. v. 19, where, since by one man many are said to have been made sinners, "many," or according to the import of the original, "the many," means the multitude, or whole bulk of mankind, and is plainly equivalent to "all men."

The minister's delivering the holy elements to each communicant, is not contrary to our Saviour's direction, Luke xxii. On reading the context, it will be seen that this passage does not relate to the eucharist, but to the paschal supper, since it appears evident from the 19th and 20th verses of the same chapter, that the Lord's Supper was not instituted till after that cup was drunk. As the Scriptures are wholly silent about the manner of delivering it, we follow the practice of the first Christians. The breaking of the bread, and the delivering the elements into the hands of the communicants, is agreeable to the practice of our Saviour, and to primitive usage. The breaking of the bread is an apt representation of his sufferings. When the Romanists brought in their novelty of transubstantiation, a wafer was substituted for bread, and being suddenly lifted up, that the people might worship it, was put into the mouth of the communicant, that no particle of the body of Christ might be wasted or lost; and lest the blood should be spilt, or any accident happen, the cup was totally withheld from the laity. At the Reformation, the primitive practice was restored, and the communion in both kinds delivered into the hands of the people.

Kneeling is a proper posture at receiving the elements. Some think that the apostles received in the posture which they used at meals, and that we ought to imitate them in this. If so, we should recline or lie down, for so they did, according to the custom of the country. But we may with reason conclude, that when our Saviour blessed the bread and wine, this

being an address to God, both he and they were in some posture of adoration, and that they changed it before receiving it is not likely, considering how different that was from a common meal. The ancient Church never used to receive sitting, nor is there the least intimation of such a practice in any ancient writer; sometimes the communicants stood and bowed their bodies; at other times knelt at the altar. Sitting was first introduced by the Arians, who, denying the divinity of our Lord, thought it not robbery to be equal with him, and sit down at his table. The Bishop of Rome also, assuming to be Christ's vice-gerent, uses this familiarity with his Lord. So that he, as God, "sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," 2 Thess. ii. 4.

That kneeling looks greatly like adoration of the elements, and took its rise from the Popish error of considering them the very body and blood of Christ, is asserted by those who study for pretences to palliate their unjustifiable separation from us, or designed neglect of this sacrament. The express declaration of the Church, however, at the end of the communion service, is a sufficient answer to the objection. "Whereas it is ordained in this office for the administration of the Lord's Supper, that the communicants should receive the same kneeling; (which order is well meant for a *signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgement* of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the holy communion as might otherwise ensue;) yet lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved: It is hereby declared, That thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine thereby

bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and *therefore may not be adored*, (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians,) and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one."

One would have thought that such a protestation, so plainly worded, and publicly set forth, in a book so scanned by dissenters, must have for ever silenced all cavils, and removed all suspicions. To be unmindful of the disclaimer it contains, and regardless of the explanation it renders, is neither the part of candour nor honesty.

The following considerations will show the peculiar propriety of kneeling. The Lord's Supper is the highest ordinance in the religion of Jesus. It is, above and beyond all others, calculated to spread over the heart the deepest, the most solemnized feelings of humiliation; to awaken the liveliest emotions of that gratitude which is composed of thrilling thankfulness for mercy extended, and self-abasement for guilt incurred. Far more than any other ordinance, it carries us into the contemplation of those scenes and acts of wonder in which were wrought out our redemption for the lost, and pardon for the condemned. When the heart is renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, (and it is only such a heart should be found at this holy solemnity,) it is, perhaps, then more drawn into a nearness to God's felt presence, into a closer communion with his unseen Spirit, than in any other exercise of adoration. He that is hidden from the mortal eye is then often revealed to his believing people "in the breaking of bread," (Luke xxiv. 35.)

Is it wonderful that our Church,—expecting such hallowed and humble frames in her children, anticipating that many a worshipper, if visited by them in the moments of solitary meditation, would most naturally bend the knee when the soul was prostrate,—should at this sacrament enjoin a posture so congenial, so adapted to the heart's feelings, so expressive of all she hoped was passing within? No, we marvel not that our Church prescribed the posture; we only marvel that it could be censured.

The form of words appointed to be said on the delivery of the elements consists of three particulars: 1st, Instruction, declaring what it is, namely, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blood, &c. 2nd, Prayer, desiring that this communication of them to us may "preserve our bodies and souls unto everlasting life." 3rd, Direction, what we are to do, namely, "take eat" or "drink this in remembrance that Christ died, and that his blood was shed for us," "and to feed on him by faith with thanksgiving," and to be thankful for his blood-shedding; and this part is a full paraphrase on our Saviour's words, and the whole form together comes as nigh to his own words, in his administering this his last supper, as can well be.

The following wise and pious directions have been given for the behaviour of communicants.

If any book be brought up to the altar by any as an aid to piety, it should be shut whilst they are receiving the elements from the minister, and undivided attention given to the important words which he is uttering. Whilst the ministers and others are receiving, those who are preparing to receive, may employ any time there is to spare in reading some appropriate Scriptures, and meditations upon them.

When each person has communicated, he should return to his seat, that he may not hinder others

from coming to the altar, and then renew his meditations ; or, if there be sufficient time, he may remember that since all our prayers are accepted for Christ's sake, now we have received him, and are full of the apprehensions of his love, we may affectionately in our hearts pray for all mankind, and for the whole Church; as also for any blessings for this Church, for the sovereign, magistrates, ministers, and people thereof; and particularly for our neighbours and friends, relations and acquaintance ; especially for those that are sick or sorrowful, poor or distressed, and also for ourselves, for pardon, grace, and courage to keep our vows : yea, if we have time, we may meditate of the baseness and danger of the ways we have renounced, of the wisdom and comfort of a holy life, the greatness of God's assistance, and the mercy of his acceptance, with the sweetness of his rewards. And further, we may resolve upon such acts of charity, to the souls and bodies of our brethren, as we will afterwards perform ; and this will banish vain and impertinent thoughts, and keep our devotions alive till the priest has done the celebration ; and then having most heartily wished that all the communicants may be accepted as well as we, we must join in the post-communion.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### COMMUNION SERVICE, CONTINUED.

#### THE Post-COMMUNION—TO THE END.

THE post-communion properly commences with the LORD'S PRAYER; we can at no time repeat it more effectually, than when we have just commemorated the meritorious sufferings and death of its Divine Author. To as many as receive him, he gives power to be-

come the sons of God, (John i. 12,) wherefore we may now call God *our Father*, and desire his name may be *hallowed* and praised for all his kindness towards us ; and if ever we be in a fit disposition to wish his *kingdom* may *come*, it is now when we have made our peace with Him. We have now such assurances that He always wills that which is for our good, that with entire submission we may say, O Lord ! not my will, but *thine be done*. He has given us heavenly bread to feed our souls, and also we need not question but he will *give us* every day our *daily bread* to sustain our natural life ; we have set forth the memory of that great propitiation, and now by the virtue of that sacrifice, we may cheerfully ask the *forgiveness of our trespasses*, and shall prevail the sooner, because in the feast of charity, we have *forgiven* all them that have *trespassed against us*; we have vowed to forsake all evil ways, and so may reasonably desire to be *kept* from *temptation*, and *delivered* from all kinds of *evil*, and because the post-communion is properly eucharistical, and the devotions in it designed as an act of praise for the benefits received in this holy sacrament, we conclude with the doxology. Our repeating the petitions of this prayer after the minister, must remind us strongly of our reconciliation in Christ, and union of hearts, as brethren in the Lord.

In the PRAYER SUCCEEDING THE LORD'S PRAYER, one great end of our devotions is specified, which the Romish mass-book altogether omits; namely, in beginning of God to accept our sacrifice of praise, we desire at the same time to offer up ourselves, soul and body, solemnly dedicating and resigning them both to his service, abstaining from all sin, and being active in every good work.

The communion is here called the sacrifice of praise, as it was termed by the ancient Church also,

whereas Romanists call it a sacrifice, without any other addition. But it is not the sacrifice of Christ which we here speak of, for that is always pleasing to God, and was absolutely perfect; but it is our own peace offering, in commemoration thereof, in which there have been many failings; and therefore we desire and beg that it may be accepted in mercy. In this regard, and in divers others also, the Eucharist may, *by allusion and analogy*, be fitly called a sacrifice, and the Lord's table an altar; the one relating to the other; *though neither of them can be strictly and properly so termed*. It is the custom of Scripture to describe the service of God under the New Testament, be it either internal or external, by the terms which otherwise belonged to the Old; as immolation, offering, sacrifice, and altar: so the evangelical prophet Isaiah, foretelling the glory and amplitude of the Christian Church, speaks of God's altar which shall be there, upon which an acceptable offering shall be made, (Isai. lx. 7, &c.; see also Rom. xv. 16; Phil. i. 17; Heb. xiii. 10;) and indeed the Eucharist carries the name of a sacrifice, and the table whereon it is celebrated, an altar of oblation, in a far higher sense than any of the former sacrifices did, which were but the types and figures of those services that are performed in recognition and memory of Christ's one sacrifice, once offered upon the altar of his cross. The prophecy of Malachi, (i. 10,) concerning the Church under the New Testament, applied by the doctors of the Roman Church to their proper sacrifice, as they call it, of the mass, is interpreted and applied by the ancient fathers, sometimes in general, to all the acts of our Christian religion, and sometimes in particular, to the Eucharist; that is, the act of our prayer and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Christ once made for us upon the cross, as here we use in the Church of Eng-

land; our Church therefore herein followeth the Scripture and the ancient fathers. See also Psalm i. 14; Hos. xiv. 2; Heb. xiii. 15; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3; Psalm cxli. 2.

In the conclusion of this prayer, after supplicating that ourselves and fellow-communicants may be fulfilled, that is, abundantly satisfied with God's grace, we acknowledge our own services to be altogether imperfect, and declare our only hope of acceptance and pardon is *through Jesus Christ* by whom we are directed to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, which we do here by ascribing glory to the whole Trinity, from every person of whom we have now received peculiar testimonies of grace and favour.

There is another PRAYER which is SOMETIMES USED IN PLACE OF THIS; suitable when we have more than ordinary comfort in receiving; for as the other consists chiefly of vows, so doth this of prayer for perseverance, which is highly necessary after the sacrament. To sing an HYMN AFTER THIS OFFICE is in imitation of our Saviour's practice, and it hath ever been observed in all churches and ages, and how can we welcome our Saviour into our hearts more properly than by that hymn wherewith the angels welcomed Him into the world? (Luke ii. 24.) The author of the remaining part is uncertain, but it has been used in the Church of England for above 1,200 years. The ascriptions of praise in the latter part of this hymn, are asserted by dissenters to be vain repetitions; yet if so, they are similar to those in Rev. vii. 12, and v. 13; but on the contrary, they are far from redundant, every word is highly pertinent, and hath its peculiar signification. We praise Him by setting forth his greatness, we bless Him by declaring his goodness, we worship Him with our bodies, we glorify Him with our lips, we give Him thanks with our hearts, for the great glory which

arises to himself for these his mercies towards us. The accumulation of energetic expressions of gratitude and joy show the warmth and fervour of our affections, and the pouring forth from the abundance of thankful hearts such acknowledgments as become those who have received the greatest of all spiritual blessings. When we address the Saviour, "*Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord,*" be it observed, that we apply these words of Rev. iv. 4, to Him as distinguished not personally, but essentially, that is, not as He is the second person of the Trinity, for God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, are also as holy as God the Son, and all Three together are the only Holy One; but as He is a Being uncreated and infinitely excellent above all other beings; as He is God himself, and for that reason supremely holy, or the only Holy One. Again, since God is called the blessed and only Potentate, (1 Tim. vi. 15,) that is, the only Lord; consequently this appellation, belongs to our Saviour Christ, as He is God in the same sense as He is the only Holy One; namely, not personally, but essentially. There are indeed holy angels and saints, and there are lords many, (Cor. viii. 5,) yet none of these have any propriety in this title, because their holiness is imperfect and derived; only Jesus is holy, in and of himself, and of his holiness all others do receive. "He is holy and hallowed, because he halloweth and sanctifieth us," as the liturgy of St. James paraphraseth. "He only is the Lord," saith St. Augustine, "who hath no other Lord above Him; for He only with the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father, God blessed for ever;" and this is the reason why we exalt Him so highly, and pass by the mediation of saints and angels; because none is so holy, none so mighty, none so high in the favour of God, nor none so gracious and loving to us as Jesus is. This we acknowledge therefore with all possible joy

and triumph, and it is a mighty rejoicing to our spirits, that He, who hath given himself for us, and is come to dwell with us, is so high and magnificent.

It is a Scriptural and primitive practice to dismiss religious assemblies with a BLESSING ; this was, under the Old Testament sometimes pronounced by the king, (2 Sam. vi. 17, 18 ; 1 Kings, viii. 54, 55;) but to bless in the name of the Lord, was the peculiar office of the priest, (Deut. x. 8 ; Numb. vi. 23.) Our Lord took leave of his disciples with a blessing, (Luke xxiv. 50,) and the blessing he left them, was his peace, (John xiv. 27.) The form of giving it is set down by St. Paul, which we use, ordering the bishop, when present, to pronounce it, because the less is blessed of the greater, (Heb. vii. 7,) and all to stay till this blessing was given. In pronouncing it, the minister of Christ solemnly desires "that the peace of God which passeth all understanding," that inward sense of his goodness to us, which even now is delightful beyond the conception of those who have never experienced it, and shall hereafter be so heightened as vastly to exceed the present conception of the best of us, may "keep our hearts and minds," our judgments and affections, "in the knowledge of God and his Christ," and that every "blessing" of the Holy Trinity may be distributed "amongst us, and remain with us always." The form of this Christian blessing runs in the name of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into which we were baptized, and therefore, seemingly most proper for the use of the Christian Church. The people should observe carefully respecting this benediction, that it is not merely a prayer, but likewise an absolution, an assurance of blessing and of peace ; for God will bless those that are duly qualified to receive the sacerdotal blessing ; and the benedictions and absolutions which the ambassadors of Christ ministerially pronounce

upon earth, will be ratified in heaven. The people should therefore receive this blessing as coming from God himself, with all imaginable devotion ; they should be careful not to repeat it after the priest and thus usurp his office, but should most fervently, in their hearts, desire of God to ratify and confirm it.

THE COLLECTS, ONE OR MORE, which are TO BE USED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MINISTER, are plain and comprehensive, and almost every sentence of them taken from Scripture ; the first is a prayer for safety in all worldly changes ; the second, for preservation of our souls and bodies ; the third, for a blessing on God's word, whether read or expounded ; the fourth, for direction and success in all our undertakings ; the fifth, for excusing the defects of all our former prayers, taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians ; the last for the acceptance of all the rest of our supplications, containing the three qualifications of an acceptable prayer : that it be made in Christ's name, (John xiv. 13 ; xvi. 23;) that it be agreeable to God's will, (1 John, v. 14;) that it be asked in faith, (Matt. xxi. 22 ; Jas. v. 15.)

In the Latin, in which the FIRST COLLECT was composed, the word "Assist us, O Lord," is literally *be present* with us, so that to assist in prayers, is to be present at them, or present with those who offer them. Now God is said to be so present, when He hears and receives them graciously, and, accordingly, our Church translates the same word in the collect, 23rd Trinity, "Be ready to hear the prayers," and in that for 1st Trinity, the same phrase is rendered, "Accept our prayers." It is not irreligious to make use of the expression, "the chances of this mortal life," for our Saviour has not scrupled to use it, (Luke x. 30; see also Eccl. ix. 10.) In these places it means occurrence, and affords no countenance to the excluding God's providence from the government of the universe.

The word *prevent* occurring in the fourth collect, is derived from the Latin, and means to *go before*; a person may go before another either to prepare his way, or obstruct it, and accordingly in its figurative sense the word to *prevent* means both to make way, or assist before-hand, or to hinder. It is used in its primary signification in this prayer, as also in the collect for Tuesday in Easter week, and in the 10th Article, and also in Psalms xxi. 3; lix. 10; and 1 Thess. iv. 15. A sentence from an old author exhibits the original meaning of the word: “I purpose to be up early to-morrow to *prevent* the sun rising,” meaning, of course, before sun-rising. This collect states forcibly and plainly the true state of a much controverted question concerning the concurrence of grace and free will; the sum is, that without God’s preventing grace, or peculiar disposition of his favourable providence, we cannot do any works at all, though but morally good, as a learned Jesuit acknowledges; nor any works spiritually good, without God’s assistant grace, or gifts of the spirit inherent in us. In this collect, this is that which is better expressed by the “furtherance of his continual help.” In the latter part of the prayer, “that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify thy name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life,” we have all that the Romish Church would have said concerning the necessity of good works, whether unto justification or salvation, and all again that the Reformed Churches have said against the Romish Church, concerning justification by faith only without works. When we pray that we may glorify God’s name by our good works, this argues their necessity to salvation, if not to justification: and when we pray that after we have glorified God’s name by our good works, “we may obtain everlasting life by God’s mercy in Christ and through Christ;” this is an argument, most

decisive, that we must not rely upon, or put our confidence in, the best works that we do, though we do them continually; but in God's mercy and Christ's merits only: and this is the full and lively expression of the apostle's meaning, when he saith, "we are justified by faith in Christ alone."

Though we offer such general requests as include all particulars whatsoever, yet we, in the FIFTH COLLECT, beg of God to give us the "things which, for our blindness, we cannot ask." This petition relates to our particular requests, in which respect, we often ask amiss, because we do not understand what is best for us.

In the Primitive Church, while Christians continued in their strength of faith and devotion, those who were qualified, celebrated the Lord's Supper once every day, but as piety declined, the custom was broken off, and fell from every day to Sundays and holydays only, and thence to once a-year, so that excepting Easter, the priest was left to communicate alone, which was the origin of the solitary masses, one of the great corruptions which disgrace the Church of Rome. Among the first efforts of our Reformers, was the rectifying this abuse, and to restore more general and frequent communion. They succeeded in abolishing private masses (in which respect they were more successful than the foreign Reformers), but were unable to re-establish the practice of communicating every Lord's day. The design of the first rubric, after this service, was not only that the Church may still show her readiness to administer this sacrament upon Sundays and holydays, and that if it is not administered, it is the people's fault\*, but also, because there are several particulars in that part of the service which ought to be read to those who do not communicate as

\* Would it not be a stronger invitation to communicants, if the elements were in view and ready to be put on the table?

well as to those who do, namely, the ten commandments, which it is requisite the people should often hear and be reminded of—The collects, epistles, and gospels, proper for all Sundays and holydays, without which, those festivals could not be distinguished either from one another, or even from ordinary days, nor consequently, celebrated so as to answer the end of their institution—The Nicene creed, wherein the divinity of our Saviour is declared—the Offertory, or select sentences of Scripture, to excite the people to offer unto God something of what He has given them, as an acknowledgment that they receive from Him all they have, of which they ought to be put in mind at least every Lord's day, (1 Cor. xvi. 2.)—Lastly, the prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church *militant here upon earth*. Most of these things make up that part of the service in the ancient Church, at which the catechumens, who were not admitted to the reception of the Eucharist, were allowed to be present.

The next five Rubrics are levelled against Romish innovations, such as solitary masses, reservation of the elements for profane and superstitious and idolatrous uses.

There is a direction that every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times a year. In consequence of the neglect and decline of charitable feeling above alluded to, canons were made to oblige men to receive three times a year at least, namely, at Easter, Christmas, and Whitsuntide, probably in conformity to the ancient Jews, who were commanded by God himself to appear before the Lord at the three great feasts, which correspond to these, namely, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles; and those that neglected to communicate at those seasons were censured and anathematized. Our Church, in ordering

every parishioner to communicate at least three times a year, is far from requiring them not to communicate oftener; and God forbid that any good Christian should make this an excuse for receiving no oftener, if he has opportunity! and woe be to that pastor who will not give the well-disposed part of his flock more frequent opportunities of testifying their love to Jesus Christ, of increasing their graces, and securing their pardon and salvation! There is indeed no time at which it is not our duty to remember the most cruel death which the Author of Life underwent for us. The time of Easter, however, peculiarly claims the remembrance of so great a mystery, when the work of our redemption was accomplished, and at which season, consequently, we should dwell upon the contemplation of it, with the strictest attention as well as the greatest devotion.

Such is our service; so ancient and scriptural, so full of adoration to the Lord God, and love to the Saviour. Such is the penitential feeling which it tends to excite; such the deep convictions for sin which it tends to awaken; and the joyful hope of purified affections held out therein. What views of Christ's atonement does it present! What assurance of continued union with Christ; and of our deriving through Him strength, comfort, victory. It is not a bare commemoration of Christ, but an ordinance of God for conveying sanctifying vigour to the soul from Jesus Christ, as the fountain of life. How do we flee to every human help to prolong this fleeting shadow of earthly existence! and shall we be indifferent to the securing our spiritual life? Can a man believe that Christ died to procure his salvation, and that he cannot reasonably hope to be saved but in the way appointed by his Lord, and yet refuse to partake of the

chief instrument vouchsafed for making him fit for the kingdom of heaven? How any persons who profess themselves really anxious to live for Christ, can *altogether* withdraw themselves from the Lord's supper, is indeed a mystery! Must it not make us fear that there is some sinful desire or doing, indulged, which oftentimes hinders the approach? O that we could see congregations bearing some proportion to the inhabitants, and the communicants bearing some proportion to the body of the congregation! That we could behold the young coming forward to put on the impenetrable armour of grace; and the man of business rejoicing to lay his burden of care at the foot of the cross; and the aged, within a few steps of the eternal world, fearing to disobey the last command of their blessed Redeemer! Remember the zeal of the early Christians, and receive, *as often as you may*, these tokens of love, no less sure to faith than if an angel's hand were the bearer. Have we not sin to answer for, and be purified from? "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John i. 7.) Have we not need of help? "My strength is made perfect in weakness," (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Have we not blessings to acknowledge? And do we ask what reward shall we give unto the Lord for all the benefits which He hath done? "I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psalm cxvi. 13.)

Having thus gone through our public service, from the exhortation to the final blessing, we may well say of it as was said of Tyrus, "Thy builders have perfected thy beauty!" (Ezek. xxvii. 4); and we ought not to omit that memorable testimony, worthy not only to be fixed on record, but to be engraven on the horns of the altar, which was given to our Common Prayer by the King and Parliament in that act which

established the use of it; "That it was BY THE AID OF THE HOLY GHOST, with uniform agreement concluded and set forth. May it ever enjoy the same testimony from their successors, and may they ever support, strengthen, and invigorate those laws which have been placed as a fence about it, that no persons whatsoever presume, under the highest penalties, to preach, declare, or speak anything in derogation, depraving, or despising of the said book, or anything therein contained, or any part thereof."—*Act for Uniformity.*

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Besides the Constant Offices of the Church, she has also appointed Occasional Services, and all of them admirably suited to the several important occurrences of human life to which they relate. They are besides framed in conformity with the practice of the Divine Founder of our religion, who by his teaching, and especially by his example, marked the influence of his Gospel as extending not only to the congregational offices of devotion, but also to those in which members of the Church, in their individual capacity, are particularly interested. Thus we find him not only in the temple on the Sabbath, but with his disciples at the last supper; at the marriage feast; blessing the little children; visiting the sick; comforting the afflicted; at the grave with the mourners; and pointing to the resurrection. So has our Church, with affectionate regard for the spiritual wants and necessities of her members, appointed devotional services for those leading events in the life of man, which especially call for and require the benign and consolatory influence and aid of our holy religion.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## OCCASIONAL OFFICES:—BAPTISM.

## THE MINISTRATION OF PUBLIC BAPTISM OF INFANTS, TO BE USED IN THE CHURCH.

BAPTISM being the sacrament of our initiation and entrance into Christianity, and by order of nature before the Communion, the office belonging to it might naturally be supposed to hold the pre-eminent place in our liturgy; but as the Communion, both in the primitive Church and in the beginning of the Reformation, was accounted the principal part of the daily service of God in public, and baptism more rarely happening, the Church thought fit to make them contiguous in order, which were so frequent companions in use.

Three Offices for Baptism have been appointed by our Church; 1st, for the public baptism of healthful infants openly in the Church; 2nd, a private and short office for the baptism of weak infants in houses; 3rd, for the baptism of persons who have arrived at years of discretion, and are able to answer for themselves.

Washing with water fitly represents that regeneration or new birth which our Saviour requires of us (John iii. 3—7), before we can become Christians; for as that is the first office done unto us after our natural birth, in order to cleanse us from the pollutions of the womb (Ezek. xvi. 4), so when we are admitted into the Church we are first baptized, whereby the Holy Ghost cleanses us from the pollutions of our sins, and renews us unto God (Tit. iii. 5), and so become as it were spiritual infants, and enter into a new life and being, which before we had not. For this reason,

when the Jews baptized any of their proselytes, they called it their "new birth, regeneration, or being born again;" and, therefore, when our Saviour used this phrase to Nicodemus, he wondered that he, "being a master in Israel," should not understand him. And in the Christian Church, by our Saviour's institution and appointment, those who are dead to God through sin are born again by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost. How proper water is to typify the Holy Ghost, may be seen by consulting several texts of Scripture where water and the blessed Spirit are mentioned as corresponding one to another, (Isaiah xliv. 3 ; John iv. 14 ; vii. 37-40.)

Christ instituted the form of baptism only as to the essential parts of it, namely, that it should be performed by a proper minister, with "water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19); but as for the rites and circumstances of the administration of it, he left them to the determination of the apostles and of the Church; yet, without doubt, a form was very early agreed upon, because almost all the Christian Churches so administer it in the same manner. The latter age, indeed, had made some superfluous additions\*, but our reformers removed them, and restored this office to a nearer resemblance of the ancient model than any other Church can show.

No express mention of baptizing infants has been made by Christ or his apostles, and we must therefore gather the truth from the reasoning of analogy, from incidental expressions, and the records of the practice of the Church; (and here we may remark by the way, that Scripture makes no express mention of the alteration of the Sabbath, and yet there are few who do not think the observation of the first day of the week

\* See PALMER's *Antiquities of the English Ritual*, Vol. II. page 168.

is sufficiently authorized by the New Testament; and yet this is not more clearly implied than the other,) God commanded infants to be circumcised, which proves that there is no impropriety in admitting them into a religious covenant; and this command, when applied to baptism, is of greater weight, as it is admitted that circumcision was a type of baptism. Our Saviour made no restriction or exception when he instituted baptism, which he did in very general terms: "Go and make disciples of (as the original word signifies) all nations, baptizing them," &c.; this is a proof that he intended no alteration in the objects of baptism, but only to exalt the action of baptizing to a nobler purpose and larger use, for nations consist of persons of all ages, and therefore infants as well as adults are included; and this inference will be more evident, when we reflect that the commission was given in Judea, where baptism was an ordinary rite, administered by the Jews, as well to their own as to the children of proselytes, and who would consequently receive converts to Christianity in the same manner. Had our Saviour intended any alteration in the Jewish practice of baptism, or any limitation with respect to age, he would not have failed to specify it. And since the Gospel is a better covenant than the Jewish law (Heb. viii. 6), it must be inferred that there is in the former the same comforts and assurances to parents that there is in the latter, which admitted children into it the eighth day after their birth, (Gen. xvii.) When Lydia was baptized, and her household (Acts xvi. 15), and when St. Paul baptized the household of Stephanas, it is hard to believe that there was never a child in those families. Since the apostles assure us that "they which are of faith," that is, all Christians, "are children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7), then surely their offspring have as

good a title to partake of the federal rite of baptism, whereby they may enter into the Christian covenant, as the carnal progeny of Abraham had to enter into the Jewish covenant by circumcision. When the apostle declares that the children of a believing parent are holy (1 Cor. vii. 14), it cannot be denied but that either they were actually entered into the Christian covenant, or at least they had a title thereunto\*.

This was likewise the sentiments of the primitive Christians, as may be inferred from passages in the apostolical fathers, Clement of Rome, and Hermas; Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, in the second century; and Origen in the third, expressly mentions infant baptism as the common practice of their times; the application of Fidus to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and Cyprian's answer prove the same. Tertullian (who objected to it for a particular reason of his own,) yet admits it to be the general practice, and

\* "Suppose a decree to go forth that a nation of slaves (as the Negroes in the West Indies lately were) should be made free, would not such a decree infer that all individuals of this nation, young as well as old, infants as well as adults, are to be made free? and would the incapacity of the children to understand the principle on which the thing was done, the nature of the change from bondage to liberty, and the moral responsibility involved in it, preclude them from participating in the benefit?"—*Young Churchman Armed*, by Rev. T. BIDDULPH.

"The real question is, are we to withhold baptism from infants, because they are not yet capable of entering into the spiritual signification of the rite, or the proper feelings with which, in the case of an adult, it should be approached? We answer, no; for if children dying in infancy are capable of such a higher degree of grace as is necessary in order that they may hereafter be made meet for an inheritance among the saints in light, (and who shall deny that they are?) much more may we believe them capable of such a lesser degree of grace as is necessary in order to make them members of Christ's Church upon earth and partakers of his covenant promises. Moreover as it was clearly the will of God that Jewish children should be brought into covenant with Him, from what are we to infer that ours are to be left to his *uncovenanted* mercies, and be suffered to have no more interest in the *promises* than the babes of the heathen or the Turk?"—*Ibid.*

by contending for infants being baptized if in danger, allows the principle upon which it was founded. Infant baptism is not mentioned in the canons of any Council, nor inserted in any creed, and thence we may infer it was not controverted at any period of the ancient Church, Peter Bruis, a Frenchman, so late as the eleventh century, being the first opposer of it who had a regular congregation. The Anabaptists of Germany took their rise in the fifteenth century, but there was not any congregation of them in England till A.D. 1640.

In the early church, whilst in a state of persecution, there was no settled place for the purpose of baptism, and it being celebrated first in warm climates, the apostles baptized by dipping the whole body—burying it as in a grave, either at the side of a river or lake. Pouring the water, or sprinkling, was also used, (Acts, xvi. 33.) When Christians had rest from their enemies, they established a baptistery, or place where persons should be baptized, hard by the entrance to the church, yet even then inconveniences arose which justified a less objectionable mode of baptism. In accordance with the usages of that period, our fonts are generally situated near the chief entrance into the house of God, in order to impress our minds with a devout feeling of admission, by this sacrament, into the Church of the Redeemer.

The rubric directs baptism to be administered only on Sundays and holydays, and in the common language of the country, immediately after the last lesson, because the greatest congregations then meet, who may be witnesses of the reception of the newly baptized into Christ's Church, and intercede for them at the Throne of Grace, and may thereby receive benefit also themselves, by refreshing their memories by the recital of the sacred engagements which they them-

selves formerly made. When the questions and answers are making, they are not, indeed, to join therein,—this transaction being between the minister on one side, and the God-parents on the other; but the time, instead of being lost, will be employed to their spiritual advantage, if each person reflects that the same occurred at his own baptism, and if he takes this proper opportunity of renewing his vows, which were then made for himself. Thus shall he turn this part of the service into an act of true devotion, beneficial to his own soul, and acceptable to Almighty God.

The use of God-parents was derived from the Jews, as well as the initiation of infants itself: and the witnesses mentioned by Isaiah (Isa. viii. 2), at the naming of his son, were probably of the same nature as these sureties. The Christian Church being in a state of persecution, and the lives of Christians brought into imminent peril, it was thought essential that God-parents should be chosen, pledging themselves, as guardians to the soul of the infant, if reduced to an orphan state, and helpers to the parents in the religious education of the children if they lived. There was no scruple or interruption in the use of them, till the Anabaptists, and other Puritans of late years, raised some idle clamours against them. Their appointment is in accordance with the laws of all nations, by which infants are allowed guardians (since they cannot speak for themselves) to contract for them in secular matters; which contracts, if they be fair and beneficial, the infants must make good when they come to age; it cannot, therefore, seem unreasonable for the Church to allow them spiritual guardians, to promise those things in their name, without which they cannot obtain salvation. And this too gives security to the Church, that the children shall not apostatize, from whence they are called “sureties;” provides monitors

to every Christian, to remind them of the vow, which they made in their presence, from whence they are called "witnesses," and better represents the new birth, by giving the infants new and spiritual relations, whence they are termed "god-fathers and god-mothers."

Our Church differs from that of Rome, as in other points, so also in the ministration of baptism. The Romish church, holding the absolute necessity of baptism to salvation, allows persons not having the ministerial commission, to baptize in cases of danger or necessity; our Church determines that even private baptism, even in such cases, should be administered only by a lawful minister; considering, that however excellent be the sacrament of baptism by reason of its spiritual grace, that grace is not promised except to its due administration; and that it were better to leave the child to the uncovenanted mercy of God, than to make pretence of ministering unlawfully, and thus attempt to bring the child into covenant with God, by an instrument not of his appointment.

People sometimes busy themselves with inquiring, *whether*, if at all, *why*, any difference will be made in the future condition of children, incapable as they are of actual sin, accordingly as they may die baptized or unbaptized? Such inquiries, show a presumptuous rather than a pious and humble spirit. However God, by the secret ways of his incomprehensible mercy, may be thought to save without baptism, those children who, without any fault of their own, but altogether from the neglect of their parents, may have lost the opportunity of participating in that privilege, to which, as children of Christian parents, they were entitled; the parents themselves have not the like reason to expect indulgence for their neglect, by which they will have done all that lay in their power

towards excluding their children from salvation. "If Christ himself," says Hooker, "which giveth salvation, do require baptism, it is not for us that look for salvation, to sound and examine him whether unbaptized persons may be saved; but seriously to do that which is required, and religiously to fear the danger which may grow by want thereof. God which did not afflict that innocent whose circumcision Moses had over-long deferred, took revenge on Moses himself for the injury which was done through so great neglect; giving us thereby to understand that they whom God's own mercy saveth without us, are, on our parts notwithstanding, and as much as in us lieth, destroyed, when under insufficient pretences, we defraud them of such ordinary outward help as we should exhibit." Parents who wantonly neglect to have their children admitted to baptism, will do well, instead of speculating upon the possible result to their children, to reflect upon the probable result of neglect to themselves, and to consider, whether, if their children die unbaptized, they must not be regarded as guilty of casting away the souls of their children, notwithstanding the children themselves may be saved by the free mercy of God.

The form for public baptism *may be used in private*, for it is a public office, to be used only at the font or fountain of baptism, and supposes all along a congregation to be present; several expressions in it further show the absurdity of using it in private, for how can the priest, addressing the sponsors, say, "ye have brought this child here to be baptized," when he himself is brought thither to baptize it; and how can the words "Grant that whomsoever is *here* dedicated to Thee by our office and ministry," be applicable to a room in a private house?—*See Chapter on Rubrics.*

The minister, in the commencement of the office,

is enjoined to ask, hath this child been already baptized or not? that he may not unawares baptize a child that has been baptized before; which is contrary to the word of God, and to the usages and laws of the Christian Church in all ages. For though several persons are recorded in Scripture to be baptized, there is no mention of any one that was rebaptized, though they were to receive the Lord's supper often, (1 Cor. xi. 24.) As this is the initiatory rite of our religion, it ought not to be repeated: since we enter into our religion but once, to reiterate the form were only to make sport with, or at least to prevent the intent of the sacred mystery. And to this probably relate the "one faith, one baptism," (Eph. 4, 5,) and the "once enlightened," (Heb. vi. 4.)

This office is divided into three parts—THE INTRODUCTION, which includes merely one half of the office, extending from the beginning to the prayer which follows the exhortation after the Gospel inclusively; 2nd, THE PREPARATORY OFFICE, including the renunciations and professions; and 3rd, THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT and the conclusion.

It seems suitable that this office should commence with an EXHORTATION TO PRAYER; in this sacrament, there being a mutual covenant between God and man, so vast a disproportion between the parties, and so great a condescension on the part of the Almighty, who designs only our advantage by it, and is moved by nothing but his own free grace to do it. The necessity of prayer for the infant will further appear from the consideration of the sin in which he was conceived and born, which, although arrogantly denied by the old Pelagians, and their revived issue—the Socinians and Anabaptists, yet is affirmed in Scripture, (Ps. li. 5; Rom. v. 12, 18; Job, xiv. 4, 5,) and was observed by the light of nature among the heathens, believed by

revelation among the Jews, and all orthodox Christians, and hath a thousand witnesses in every man's breast how miserably prone he is to evil, against his reason, his judgment, and his resolutions ; "that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," by his own strength utterly powerless to rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and that he stands infinitely in need, therefore, of an Almighty deliverer. And it was very necessary for the Church to lay this foundation; because the denial of original sin hath always been followed by the contempt of infant baptism.

By the expression, a *lively* member of Christ's Church, is meant one who has a lively faith, which teaches him to believe not only what is written in the Scriptures, but to receive its promises and privileges thankfully, and seek to live faithfully by its rules.

This office accordingly having taken for its basis that first principle of revealed truth, the doctrine of our original wretchedness, "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin," and from this humble confession of our lost estate, proceeds immediately to point out our only means of restoration, certifying, after the divine authority of our Redeemer, that none can enter into the kingdom of God, can have no part in the kingdom of grace and glory, except he be regenerated and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost, that is, in the most catholic, and therefore, according to St. Peter's rule, (2 Pet. i. 20,) the best, unless he be baptized : and thus, in two short sentences, it sets forth the entire ground-work of personal Christianity. Baptism with water and the Holy Ghost, we may thence perceive, is a remedy provided by God to purify from original defilement, water to cleanse the outward, and Spirit to purify the inward man. The baptism of water without the Spirit will not suffice; nor yet the

baptism of the Spirit without water; for St. Peter orders those to be baptized with water who had received Spirit before, Acts, x. 47, 48.

The suitableness of this divine appointment may be seen from the following consideration. Human nature was found by the Gospel in a state of utter and helpless destitution: it was to be restored by the Gospel, wholly as a system of divine grace and power. Now baptism directly meets the exigencies of the case, for, from the very commencement, it takes the great work of salvation out of the hands of man, and places it altogether in the hands of God. The lesson which human nature most needs, and least loves to learn—that God is everything and man nothing: this baptism inculcates with authority not to be resisted, and language not to be misunderstood. This will equally appear, whether we consider the sign enjoined, or the grace conveyed; for the outward baptism with water has, plainly, no inherent virtue; and the inward baptism with the Holy Ghost, imparts a virtue altogether superhuman; a regeneration, in which the power is of God alone.

Our Church is borne out by Scripture in considering, in the FIRST COLLECT, the deliverance of Noah, and of the Israelites, figures of baptism. The apostle states plainly that the Children of Israel were all of them “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” 1 Cor. x. 2; that is, that they were, by that baptism, the disciples of Moses; and consequently that baptism was a type or figure of Christian baptism, by which we are made our Saviour’s disciples. And St. Paul, speaking of Noah and his family being saved in the ark, says, “the like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now also save us,” 1 Pet. iii. 20; and how beautifully does the Church, in the prayer we are considering, liken our condition to that of Noah amidst

the horrors of the deluge ! For as the waters of the great abyss encompassed the patriarch and his little flock, even so the abounding flood of iniquity assails on all sides the infant struggling Christian ; and as Noah was borne onward still by the divine vessel, in peace and security, above the wreck of a perishing world, so the faithful Christian, who has been received into the Church by baptism, will, if only he maintain his faith firm to the end, be carried in perfect safety, through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, to rest, finally, and for ever, upon the heavenly mount of God.

The expression in THE SECOND COLLECT of this office, that the child may receive remission of his sins, is capable of two different senses. Either original sin may, with respect to the actual transgressions to which it leads, be called "sins" in the plural number; or else "remission of sins" may signify the state of remission of sins, even that covenant state through Christ, by which the remission of sins, both original and actual, is made over to us. Into this state infants are put by baptism; their original sin is immediately forgiven, and they have an assurance that their future actual sins shall be forgiven also, provided they continue in their duty.

To be "regenerate and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost," are, in the beginning of this office, spoken of as the same thing ; "the inward and spiritual grace" conveyed to us in this sacrament, is by our Church Catechism said to be "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." St. Paul says, "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Rom.

vi. 4, and the same St. Paul styles baptism "the washing of regeneration," Tit. iii. 5; because, in baptism, the Holy Spirit works in us a change, something like a new birth, translating us from a natural state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ, both the water and the spirit at the same time concurring to this new birth; for as we are but once born to our natural life, so we are but once born into our spiritual or Christian life; we are but once baptized and but once regenerated; regenerated at the very time when we are baptized. This is the language of Scripture; thus this term was applied by the ancient fathers; and thus it is used by our Church. So that to speak of a Christian's being regenerated in any other stage of his life; or to apply the term regeneration, or new birth, to the turning from a lapsed state to a state of holiness, to that renovation, amendment, or renewal of the heart of man, which is the duty of a Christian, and which the word of God exhorts us to acquire, to make it signify conversion or repentance, is, if there were no worse consequences attending it, mixing and confounding distinct notions, misapplying Scripture phrases, and abusing the ancient and known language of the Church.

It has been said that the PORTION OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL, read AFTER THE COLLECTS in this place, is improper, since the children there mentioned were not brought to be baptized; and yet a little consideration would show the weakness of the objection. In the making of a covenant, the express consent of both parties is required; and therefore, the covenant of baptism being now to be made between the Almighty God and the child to be baptized, it is reasonable, that, before the sureties engage in behalf of the infant, they should have some comfortable assurances, that God, on his part, will be pleased to consent to, and make good the agreement. For their satisfaction, therefore,

the Church puts into the mouth of the priest, who is God's ambassador, a passage of Scripture, which, though not spoken by our Saviour with express reference to baptism, was anciently applied to it with manifest propriety, since it indicates that God is willing to receive infants into his favour, and hath declared them capable of that grace and glory, which, on his part, are promised in this baptismal covenant; wherefore, the sureties need not fear to make the stipulation on their part, since they have God's own word that there is no impediment in children to make them incapable of receiving that which he hath promised, and will surely perform. From all promises, the Church in **THE BRIEF EXHORTATION WHICH FOLLOWS**, concludes, that the sureties may cheerfully promise that which belongs to their part, since God, by His Son, hath given sufficient security that His part shall be accomplished.

The twenty-ninth Canon prohibits the parents from taking the office of sponsors, because they cannot engage in a higher responsibility than that which has already been assigned them by God; and to prevent people entering upon the charge who are incapable of understanding the trust they take upon themselves, or so heedless of a Christian's obligations as not to be a communicant in the distinguishing article of Christian worship, the Canon further provides, that "no person shall be admitted as such before they have received the holy Communion;" and the rubric before the order for public baptism directs previous "notice to be given to the curate" of children being brought to be baptized, in order that he may ascertain the fitness of the sponsors.

There is nothing strange or novel in taking security from the God-parents that the infant shall observe the conditions that are required of him. It was customary

amongst the Romans for a magistrate to take an oath for the performance of his office, by proxy, when a reason occurred for his not taking it in person. Amongst the Jews, a proselyte, if of age, made profession to the court, that he would keep the law of Moses ; but in the case of minors, the court itself did profess, *in their name*, the same thing, just as in the Christian Church the sponsors do. When kings are crowned in their infancy, some of the nobility deputed to represent them, take the usual oaths ; the same do ambassadors for their principals at the testifying of leagues and articles, and guardians for their minors, who are bound, when they are able, to perform what the guardians have contracted for them, for the law looks upon them, and not the guardians, as obliged ; so does the Church account that those promises made by the God-parents in the name of the child, bind the child, as if in person he made it.

THE INTERROGATIONS used seem to have been practised in the days of the apostles. St. Peter calls baptism “the answer (or promise, in consequence of being asked) of a good conscience,” 1 Pet. iii. 21, and in the primitive Church, as appears from several passages in Chrysostom, Cyprian, Tertullian, Cyril, and Augustine, queries were always put to the persons baptized, which persons of fit age answered themselves, and children by their representatives, who are therefore to answer in the first person, (as the advocate speaks in the person of his client,) because the contract is properly made with the child, who is consequently supposed to return the several answers made by the sureties.

The queries are suitable and proper: 1st, when we enter into covenant with God, we must have the same friends and enemies as He hath, especially when the same that are enemies to Him, are also enemies to our salvation ; and therefore, since children are by nature

the slaves of the devil, and, though they have not yet been actually in his service, will nevertheless be apt to be drawn into it by the “pomps and glory of the world, and the carnal desires of the flesh;” it is necessary to secure them to God betimes, *and to engage them to take all these for their enemies*, since whoso loveth them, cannot love God, 1 John ii. 15. 2nd, *Faith* is a necessary qualification for baptism, Mark xvi. 16, and therefore before Philip would baptize the Eunuch, he asked him, “if he believed with all his heart?” and received his answer, “that he believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God,” Acts viii. 37: from which remarkable precedent, the Church hath ever since demanded of all those who enter the Christian profession, “if they believe all the articles” which are implied in that profession. 3rd, *A desire to be joined to the society of Christians*, is also necessary; wherefore, it is further demanded of the child, whether he will be baptized in this faith? because God will have no unwilling servants, nor ought men to be compelled by violence to religion; and yet the Christian religion is so reasonable and profitable, both as to this world and the next, that the God-parents may well answer for the child “that this is his desire,” since if the child could understand the excellency of this religion, and speak its mind, it would, without doubt, be ready to make the same reply. *Lastly*, St. Paul tells us, *that they that are baptized, must “walk in newness of life,”* Rom. vi. 4, for which reason the child is asked also, “if he will keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life?” For since he now takes Christ for his Master and Lord, and lists himself under his banner, it is fit he should vow, in the words of this sacrament, to observe the commands of his general. Wherefore, as he promised to forsake all “evil” before, so he must now engage to do all that

is "good," without which, he cannot be admitted into the Christian Church.

For the better understanding of the queries, it should be observed, that when an adult is baptized, the queries are put to himself, and he himself returns the answers to them; so that there is a more express and formal covenant then made between God and the person baptized; God acting by his minister, and the person baptized acting in his own person. But infants are not capable of entering into covenant in their own persons, and yet they are obliged to the terms of the covenant when they come of age. Wherefore, that this may the more be effectually represented and shadowed forth to the congregation, the questions are put to the sureties, and the sureties do make answer in the infants' names. Not that the infants can be supposed actually to renounce, believe, &c., but all this is done to signify the engagements which the infants are brought under, and which they must actually perform when they are able so to do.

With regard to these demands and answers, the sponsors and the congregation have their respective duties. The sponsors should carefully read them over, together with the concluding address, not only before they engage in this holy undertaking, but through life afterwards, and when they come to answer, not, according to the too common practice, to assent by silence or only a consenting bow, but considering it a solemn covenant, they should speak with a plain and audible voice. The congregation are not to join in this part of the service, but should employ it, each to his spiritual advantage, by seriously recollecting what passed at his own baptism, and taking this proper opportunity of renewing the vows which were then made for himself.

It is objected that the sponsors have to promise

more than they are able to perform, and great ignorance and misconception unfortunately prevail respecting the nature of the duties intended by the Church to be imposed upon those who undertake this office at the baptism of infants, as if they were, in some way, made answerable for the sins of the child. Christ offers in baptism to make a covenant with us. Now, a covenant or agreement always supposes two parties, who mutually enter into it. Christ offers in baptism to make those who receive it, partakers of certain spiritual privileges, and demands from them a promise of obedience to his word and commandments. In the case of infants, who cannot enter into this agreement, or make this promise personally, certain friends are required to come forward and make a confession of faith, and a promise of obedience on their behalf, and the duty or responsibility which devolves upon them is, as they are admonished by the minister, to see that the "infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by them;" after which admonition there follows some advice as to the course of instruction requisite; and those amongst the lower orders who may feel incompetent for the task, of entirely and adequately instructing their children, can almost always avail themselves of the privilege now so common, of sending them to the Sunday or week-day schools, which are everywhere established, in connexion with the established Church, for the benefit of the lower classes. There is, therefore, no snare for the conscience, no impossible requirement, and the child having been made acquainted with what has been agreed to respecting him, with the benefits as well as duties arising out of his baptismal engagements, must use his own mind and will, after he grows up to years of discretion. He may either ratify in his own person those engagements,

or disavow them. But as the child is asked in the Church Catechism, "Dost thou think that thou art bound to believe and do, as they have promised for thee?" and is taught to answer, "Yes, verily, and by God's help, so I will," so there have been no engagements entered into on his behalf, but such as he must adhere to, if he hopes for the blessing of eternal life. His sponsors, however, cannot be supposed to be answerable for anything more than the seeing that he has been fully acquainted with his baptismal engagements; and as to the sponsors undertaking an obedience for the child, which they know he will not be able strictly to observe, (an objection sometimes alleged,) we can only say, that a promise of a partial or imperfect obedience can never be accepted by God, neither for ourselves or for others. Our desire and intention must be to keep the whole law; "I shall observe it," says the Psalmist, "with my whole heart;" and yet, through the frailty of our nature, "in many things we may offend all."

After the contract is made, the Church, mindful that the grace given in baptism, may, unless duly cherished, be stifled and altogether sinned away, INTERCEDES with God FOR THE CHILD; 1st, for his regeneration; 2nd, for his sanctification; 3rd, for power against spiritual enemies; 4th, for his increase in grace.

By the expression, "the old Adam," occurring in the first prayer, we mean that original pollution, which we derive from our first parents; by the "new man," that gracious renovation which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, through Jesus Christ; and by the "burial" of the one, and the "raising up" of the other, we mean the mortification of the one, and the increase and vigour of the other.

## CHAPTER XVII.

PUBLIC BAPTISM, CONTINUED.—PRIVATE BAPTISM.—  
BAPTISM OF ADULTS.

THERE is much significance in BEGGING OF GOD TO SANCTIFY THE WATER. The world was darkness and a chaos, until "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. i. 2, whence the rude and indigested matter received a quickening influence, which produced that order and beauty we now behold. And as it was in the first creation and generation of all things, so it is in the new creation and regeneration of a Christian; the Spirit moving upon the waters of baptism, giveth light and life, and bringeth in order and comeliness instead of the confusion and darkness which sin had caused. Wherefore, since there is so great a work to be done by the Spirit, we must most humbly beseech that the Holy Spirit may return to its ancient seat. The primitive Church used a prayer for the consecrating of the water, similar to ours.

Our Church differs from the Romish as to the water used in baptism. Our Church simply uses a prayer for the dedication of it to its sacred use; to this the Romish Church has added strange and superstitious rites, breathing into it, quenching a candle in it, mixing oil and balsam with it, &c. Our Church directs that the water should be sanctified on every occasion on which baptism is to be administered, conformable to the ancient and universal practices of the Eastern Churches. The Romish Church only appoints the water to be changed, and new water consecrated, when that which is in the font is unfit for use.

It was the usage of every nation to NAME THEIR CHILDREN on the day on which they underwent a

peculiar ceremony. The Jews named them at the time of circumcision, Gen. xxi. 3, 4; Luke i. 59, 60, and ii. 21; and though this rite was changed into that of baptism by our Saviour, yet he made no alteration as to the time and custom of giving the name, but left that to continue under the new, as he had found it under the old dispensation. Accordingly we find this time assigned and used for this purpose ever since; the Christians continuing from the earliest ages to name their children at the time of baptism. We derive our name, together with our original guilt, from our parents, which ought to humble us, and remind us of our being born in sin; but this new name being given us as a badge that we belong to Christ, we cannot more properly receive it than when we are enlisted under his banner; and it should remind us of our new birth, when being washed in the "laver of regeneration," we were cleansed from our natural impurities, and solemnly dedicated to God; and though chosen by our parents, it is fitly given to us by those who engage we shall be brought up to live like Christians; and this was the practice of the Church in all ages.

The custom of our Church in baptizing either by immersion or affusion, is borne out by Scripture. The word baptize implies them both, it being used frequently to denote not only such washing as is performed by dipping, but also such as is performed by pouring or rubbing water on the thing or person washed, Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38, and therefore when the Jews baptized their children, in order to circumcision, it seems to have been indifferent to them, whether it was done by immersion or affusion; and that the primitive Christians understood it in this latitude, is plain, from their administering this holy sacrament in the case of sickness, haste, want of water, or the like, by affusion, or pouring a small

quantity of water on the face or head. Thus St. Paul felt no scruple in baptizing the jailer of Philippi and his family at night within the prison, where no mode could have well presented itself but sprinkling or affusion. Our Church, with great moderation, does not totally lay aside immersion, if the strength of the child will bear it, as indeed it seldom will without danger in this cold climate ; in which case, she allows affusion rather than occasion danger to the body of a tender babe, wisely considering that, in the sight of God, "mercy is better than sacrifice." The two modes, immersion and affusion, both significantly express the ends and effects of baptism. Immersion, that is burying, as it were, the person baptized in the water, and raising him out of it again, may be considered as representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and our being dead and buried to sin, and rising again to a life of piety and virtue, Rom. vi. 4; but pouring or sprinkling of water, may likewise sufficiently express our purification from the guilt of past sins, and our obligations to keep ourselves in future unspotted by those things which defile the inner man. This mode of baptism, moreover, represents that "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter i. 2, to which we owe our salvation ; and the use of it seems not only to be foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who says of our Saviour, "that he shall sprinkle many nations," Isai. lii. 15, that is, many shall receive his baptism ; and by the prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxxvi. 25, but to be had in view also by the apostle, when he speaks of our having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," Heb. x. 22.

Though the quantity of water in baptizing by affusion be left by the Church to the minister's discretion, yet he should observe, 1st, that the action be such as

is properly a “washing,” to make the administration correspond with the institution, and this he should observe as a minister of Christ at large; 2nd, that the action be such as is properly a “pouring of water,” which is the rubrical direction to express that washing at all times when dipping is not practised; and this he ought to do, as a minister of the Church of England in particular; taking it always for granted, that there is a reason for whatever is prescribed in a rubric, and such a one as is not to be contradicted by our private practice, or rejected for the sake of any customs brought in we know not how. And we should the rather keep to the rule of affusion, because we have in a manner lost the primitive way of baptizing by immersion, the dress in which children are usually brought to the font being taken as a certificate, without any more formal declaration, that “they may not well endure dipping.”

By BAPTIZING IN THE NAME OF THE THREE PERSONS, is meant, not only that it is done by the commission and authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but also that we are baptized into the faith of the Holy Trinity, and are received into that society of men who are distinguished from all false professions, by believing in three Persons and one God. This is the great fundamental article on which all the rest depend, and to which they may be referred.

Next, and *after* the baptism of the child, there is a CEREMONIAL DECLARATION THAT IT IS DEDICATED TO CHRIST, and become a member of his Church, into which the minister, as a steward of God’s family, doth solemnly receive it. “We are all baptized into one body,” 1 Cor. xii. 13.

He then solemnly MARKS IT WITH A CROSS, for the better understanding of which ancient ceremony of the primitive times, it may be observed, that masters

and generals used to mark the foreheads of their servants and soldiers with their names or marks, that it might be known to whom they belonged, to which custom the angel may be supposed to allude, Rev. vii. 3 and xiv. 1; and thus lastly, in the same chapter, as Christ's flock carried his mark on their foreheads, so did his great adversary the beast sign his servants ther also. The Christian Church then holds an analogy with these sacred applications, by signing the cross on the foreheads of her children on their admission into the Christian profession, signifying thereby their consignment to Christ. The strongest reason for the practice of this rite by the primitive Christians was, that the heathens were wont to deride them and speak disdainfully of them, as worshippers of a crucified malefactor; to encounter which reproach, and to show that they "gloried in the cross of Christ," Gal. vi. 14, taking it to be an honour, not an ignominy, they assumed this ceremony of signing themselves with the cross; and it being significant of a duty to be elicited by future practice, good reason had our Church to continue it.

When the minister says, "sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess," &c., it is not meant by the expression *that the sign has any virtue in it to effect or further this duty*; but by thus marking it in the forehead, the seat of blushing and shame, to intimate and express only what the congregation hopeth and expecteth from the infant, namely that he shall not hereafter be ashamed of the disgrace of the cross of Christ, or blush to avow the faith of Him. This ceremony, however, in process of time was greatly abused by the Church of Rome, especially after the corruption of Popery had possessed it. But the abuse of a thing does not take away from the lawful use of it; and so far was it from

the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Germany, and such like churches, in all things which they held and practised, that it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endanger the word of God, nor offend the minds of sober men, and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the apostolic churches which were their first founders\*; in which respect, amongst some other very ancient ceremonies, the sign of the cross in baptism hath been retained, but with sufficient cautions and exceptions against all Popish superstition and error.

The judgment of our Church in the matter is fully stated in the thirtieth Canon, which teaches that the *sign of the cross used in baptism is no part of the substance of the sacrament*; for when the minister, dipping the infant in water, or laying water on its face, as the case may be, hath pronounced the words "I baptize thee in the name of the Father," &c., the infant is fully and perfectly baptized. So the sign of the cross being afterwards used, doth neither add anything to the virtue and perfection of baptism, nor being omitted, doth detract anything from the effect and substance of it. And whereas in the primitive Church it was made to usher in baptism, our Church inverts the order, and makes it come after, as she further expressly declares in the same canon, "the child is received by the congregation of Christ's flock, as a perfect member thereof, before it be signed with the sign of the cross, and not by any power ascribed to that sign;" and further to assure all distrustful minds that she maketh it not of the substance of the sacrament, *she hath totally omitted it in the office of private baptism.*

\* See page 23.

The different objections now made to parts of the baptismal service were brought under public consideration long since, at the Hampton Court conference, (see *History of the Liturgy*,) when Dr. Burgess showed the sense of the Church in them; and with respect to the use of the sign of the cross, Bishop Rudd delivered his opinion in a speech, acknowledged by the Puritans to be replete with charity and moderation, “to which we may add, with manly sense also and irrefragable argument\*;” and the consequence was, that the explanation of this last ceremony was so satisfactory to Dr. Reynolds, the foreman of these opponents, that he protested “he would never gainsay it any more.”

For calling baptized infants regenerate, we have the authority of Scripture, since they are “baptized into Christ’s body,” 1 Cor. xii. 13, and “into Christ,” and “have put on Christ,” Gal. iii. 37, and consequently are new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17, since they are baptized for “the remission of sins,” Acts ii. 38, and since baptism is called the “washing of regeneration,” Tit. iii. 5, therefore the Scripture, as well as the Church, supposes them to be regenerate, unless the ordinances and promises of God are of none effect towards them†, and consequently the view entertained by the Protestant dissenters, that baptism is merely an outward sign of an inward grace, which may be then or at any other time imparted, rests merely on human reasoning and supposed experience.

The Church, nevertheless, is occasionally blamed for asserting all baptized persons to be regenerate, when several may prove very wicked. But the objection is grounded upon a modern notion of the word *rege-*

\* CARWITHEN’s *Hist. of the Church of Eng.*

† See *The Prayer Book a Safeguard against Religious Excitement*, by F. W. FABER, p. 7.

*eneration*, which neither the ancient fathers nor the compilers of our liturgy knew anything of, but which became a fashionable phrase about the beginning of the civil wars, to denote conversion, or a returning from a lapsed state, after a notorious violation of the baptismal covenant, to a state of holiness. In Scripture the word *regeneration* refers to baptism, by having the word *washing* joining with it, Tit. iii. 5. Before the apostle, our Saviour made use of a like expression, John iii. 3,—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” and what he means by being born again he explains in the 5th verse, by directing it positively to baptism,—“Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God\*.” All the Greek and Latin Fathers, in the various words by which they express regeneration, use them of baptism, and so do the most eminent divines of the Reformation, even Calvin, when he desires to speak with exactness. Thus also Cranmer, and likewise Latimer, though the contrary is said to be asserted in another part of his writings, by those who consider not his object in the argument.

Baptismal regeneration may be taught undoubtedly

\* “If spiritual regeneration be not conferred by baptism, when and by what means is it conferred? In what other ceremony and in what other season shall we find that joint operation of water and the Holy Spirit, of which Christ affirms we must be born? I say that *joint* operation, for surely those which Christ himself hath joined together, it is not for man to put asunder.”—MANT’s *Bampton Lectures*.

“Our Church asserts this scriptural doctrine, not in this office only, but also in the enumeration of baptismal privileges in the Catechism, in the Order for Confirmation, and in the Collect for Christmas-day. In the 9th, 15th, and 16th Articles, it is incidentally alluded to; and in the 27th fully and expressly set forth.”—MANT’s *Bampton Lectures*, disc. 6. In the 9th Article the word “renatis,” of the original Latin of the Article, is, in the former part of the English translation, rendered *regenerated*—in the latter *baptised*, so synonymous were the words considered by our Reformers.”—Archbishop LAWRENCE.

in a manner calculated to injure vital, inward, and practical godliness, and so might likewise vicarious atonement, and other doctrines of the Gospel; but our Church has no sympathy with such teaching. She teaches the efficacy of baptism, not in order to supersede the daily renewing of our souls, but as the source and spring of it. (Collect for Christmas-day.) She calls a Christian state a new birth unto *righteousness*, showing that Christian privileges are not *instead* of righteousness, but to *lead* to righteousness. The substance of her teaching is not, You were made Christians in your baptism, therefore all is well with you; but, You were made Christians in your baptism, *therefore live and walk as Christians*. Then God gave you a spiritual life, see that you cherish it by prayer, and by all the means of grace. Then God covenanted and pledged himself to be your God; He received you into his family as his own children, and gave you tokens of his love; "walk then as worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called," "continually mortifying all your corrupt and evil affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and holiness of living." So far from the doctrine of baptismal regeneration having a tendency to lull the mind into a false security, it is, when rightly considered, the most heart-stirring of all doctrines. It exhibits the slothful and worldly-minded Christian not in the light of a mere ordinary sinner, but as one who is throwing away the most glorious privileges, who is breaking the most solemn covenant, who is "treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace." It is the very groundwork of Christian responsibility. Those who have been baptized cannot be mere rejecters of the Gospel—they cannot be as the heathen; they stand between the highest blessing and

the deepest curse ; they must be either dwellers with God, co-heirs with Christ, or they must be apostates, reprobates, "twice dead," to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever\*.

Our Church is far from holding the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum*. She teaches not that regeneration accompanies baptism in all cases, *ex opere operato*, or from the bare external administration of the rite, but only in the case of adults, where there is the presence of actual repentance and faith, and in the case of infants where there is the promise of them, and who, since they have an *innocence* or *exemption from actual guilt* inseparable from their condition, cannot put any bar to the grace of God ; such infants she considers entitled to make this promise, and so to enjoy this blessed privilege, as are either born within her pale, of Christian parents, or who, in respect of their Christian profession, are adopted by Christians in communion with the Church, who become their sponsors ; thus, providing, so far as she is able, that they shall be brought up and "lead the rest of their life according to this beginning." And it is not to the *virtue of the consecrated element, but to the word of God*, that the Church ascribes that baptism is the ordinary and certain means of salvation in infancy : to that word of God which does not return unto him void, but accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent.

That persons fall into impurity notwithstanding the grace conferred in baptism can readily be accounted for. None are so regenerated as to extinguish absolutely all irregular desires ; "the flesh will still lust against the Spirit," but then God gives also "the Spirit to lust against the flesh," (Gal. v. 17.) He leaves this corruption to try and exercise us, but so that He en-

\* See HOOKE, *Eccles. Pol.*, v., s. 60.

gageth to enable us to get the better through this new nature implanted in us, if we will improve it, and follow the dictates of his Holy Spirit ; but by neglect, or wilful compliance with the flesh, we may lose this grace again : our gracious Father hath already done his part, and will do it more and more as we are capable of receiving it.

It requires indeed much exercise of faith to believe in baptismal regeneration, when, *to all appearance*, so many derive no benefit from it ; but it is of the very essence of faith to believe, not because we discern, but because God hath said. Yet if sponsors are chosen through a sordid regard to rank, wealth, or other worldly motives, and children left to grow up without any care to awaken their consciences, in utter ignorance of the solemn vow, promise, and profession which they have made, it is not wonderful that an impression should be conveyed to the mind, derogatory to the soundness and efficacy of this Sacrament. And yet who shall charge the majesty of God with indifference to their souls ? There is nothing more striking in the lives of persons that have gone headlong into sin, than the acknowledgment of warnings, arousings of conscience, gleams of conviction, persuasion of hope\*. Whence did these proceed, but from the spirit of God grieved, not quenched ? Do they not show that a grace given freely in baptism is not easily withdrawn ? And why should it follow in the spiritual, any more than in the natural world, that because a gift was rendered useless for want of cultivation, therefore it had never been given ? We see daily that great intellectual powers are gradually destroyed by the abuse or neglect, or trifling of their possessors ; or by being employed upon petty or unworthy objects, and being subservient to vanity or sense, are at last lost ; and this,

\* See Life of Rev. John Newton, and others.

doubtless, (as is everything in nature,) was meant as an emblem of things unseen, a warning to us to take heed to our spiritual faculties, "lest the light which is in us should become darkness."

In other offices the **Lord's Prayer** is generally placed at the beginning, in this office it is reserved until the end; because we can more properly call God our Father with respect to the infant, when it is by baptism adopted as a child of God, and solemnly received into the Church, and this is exactly conformable to the primitive Church; for the catechumens were never allowed to use this prayer till they had first made themselves sons by regeneration in the waters of baptism, wherefore this prayer is frequently, by ancient writers, called, "the prayer of the regenerate," or believers, as being, properly speaking, their privilege and birthright.

We conclude with **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PRAISES**, in imitation of the Jews and the primitive Christians, who did not question the effect of this Sacrament, not even in adults, till their future conduct declared they had broken their covenant. How much more, then, ought we to believe this in the case of infants, who can put no impediment to the grace of God, and are all alike; so that either all or none receive these blessings?

**THE EXHORTATION TO THE GOD-PARENTS** at the close of this office, instructs them in the duties which they have to perform towards the child for whom they are sureties, which consists of three distinct parts. 1st, To see that he be instructed in the nature of the covenant into which he then entered by them, and in those of matters both of belief and practice, which he then by them promised that he would believe and do—and the twofold manner of fulfilling this duty is pointed out,—the causing the child to join the public assem-

bles of the Church, there to hear the principles of his religious belief and practice declared and explained by the authorized minister of God's word; and next, to provide him with more special religious instruction, the particulars of which are the creed, Lord's prayer, ten commandments, and other parts of the Church catechism, which when thoroughly learned, so as to be understood, and properly digested, may be well said to contain "all things which a child ought to know and believe to his soul's health." 2nd, As in the former case, they were to take care that the child should receive such instruction as is generally necessary to salvation, so in the present, are they to provide that this instruction operate on the practice of the child. As they were before required to employ all the means they could command towards instructing the child in the nature of the covenant into which he had entered; so are they to employ the same means towards inducing him to fulfil the conditions of the covenant. 3rd, To take care that the child be brought to the bishop to be confirmed, as soon as he can say the creed, the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the Church catechism—a duty which completes the charitable task they have undertaken, and which, if they shall have conscientiously executed what was before required of them, they will cheerfully perform. This view of their duties will show that, in appearing at the font, they are not merely offering an idle compliment, or engaging in an affair of momentary form and ceremony, but on the contrary, that they are voluntarily entering on a sacred engagement, and that they will have to answer to God and their own consciences for the destruction of any child to whom they have neglected the duty which they had solemnly pledged themselves to fulfil.

Seeing that the duty of sponsors is so serious,

pious persons are not to imagine themselves justified on this account in refusing to undertake it. If they feel religious scruples on the subject, it is probable that they *are the very persons* who are aware of its duties, and will be most anxious and likely to perform them. The responsibility is comparatively small when the parents are conscientious persons, and live to perform their duty. Where, however, the parents are taken away before the children come to years of discretion, or if they are unconscientious or unholy persons, then the advice, example, and prayers of conscientious sponsors are more needed. I will mention three reasons for their not declining this office. 1st, They themselves had sponsors at *their baptism*,—others have entered into security for *their* Christian education and conduct, and therefore, they may with reason be expected, both by God and man, to do as much for others. (See Matt. vii. 12.) So that in many cases, they *may*, perhaps, *not be justified in declining*, there *may* be even a danger to their own souls, as well as to the souls of others, in their declining it. 2nd, They perform, *by the discharge of it*, one of the highest acts of Christian benevolence and charity; for what greater act of kindness can one mortal do for another, than direct him in the way that leads to immortality? They are doing that for which they daily pray God's blessing; they are endeavouring to promote "his will on earth, as it is done in heaven," and to establish here, as there, his kingdom. Lastly, they are securing a blessing on themselves, as well as on the person whom they represent; for it is written, that "he who shall convert a sinner from the error of his way," and consequently, we may infer, he who shall prevent a sinner from falling into that error, "shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins," James v. 20; and that, "they who turn many to righteousness,

shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3\*.

As to the sentiments of our Church respecting baptized and *unbaptized* infants, she pronounces it, in the rubric after this office, to be "certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved;" which opinion she grounds on God's universal promise, and his good will towards *all* infants brought to his holy baptism, but upon the question of the salvation of infants dying *unbaptized*, she is wholly silent; because in providing an office for the attainment of security, to have speculated upon the extent of divine mercy, independent of the means of grace, would have been, if not unwise, at least irrelevant to the professed object in her view. From a document † issued by our Reformers, we may presume that they would not exclude from salvation all unbaptized infants, and there is indeed in the Catechism, in stating the number of the sacraments, an indirect allusion on this point ‡.

#### THE MINISTRATION OF PRIVATE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN IN HOUSES.

Curates are directed to admonish the people not to defer the baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth. This sacrament being pronounced by Christ himself, John iii. 5, Matt. xvi. 16, and by his apostle, Tit. iii. 5, to be, through the ministration of the Holy Ghost, the means whereby we are to be saved, to be admitted into the kingdom of God on earth, and to be made capable of entering into the kingdom of God in heaven, it is reasonable, wise, and charitable in the Church, to require that children should at the earliest opportunity be made partakers of it.

\* Rev. CYRIL HUTCHINSON.      † *Reformation of Ecc. Laws.*  
‡ See page 261.

The Church allows of private baptism in times of extremity, "where there is great cause and necessity," "where need compels," expressions evidently pointing to cases where there is danger of death. In such cases she has provided a brief and compendious service, whereby the essentials of the sacrament may be administered at home, and whereby her ministers alone are authorized to administer it privately in houses. Still "if the child, which is after this sort baptized, do afterwards live," she pronounces it expedient that it be brought into the church, there to be publicly recognised by the minister for a Christian, and to be formally received into the congregation of Christ's flock. Other baptism than publicly at the font in ordinary cases, or privately in houses, in cases of great extremity, (but even in such cases, if the event permit, to be followed by a public consecration of the child to Christ)—the Church allows not: for any other she makes no provision. Of the sufficiency of the cause for private baptism, the minister cannot always judge, but must trust, for the most part, to the integrity of others; but, as generally speaking, he can distinguish between an extraordinary cause, and a cause of mere humour or private interest, he ought never to sacrifice the rules of his ministration to any man's fancies or domestic conveniences.

The ministration of baptism belongs to every minister lawfully called and sent; for the commission to baptize, together with that of preaching the Gospel, was given by our Lord to his apostles, and by them transmitted to other ministers, whether they were those to succeed the apostles, in the government of the Church, or those who were called to inferior offices in the same. But this ministration belongs to no other persons than those who are sent with Christ's commission; for the appointment of Christ is necessary to

authorize the performance of any act in his name, and to give assurance of any accompanying blessing. At first, indeed, our Reformers, acting under the influence of an error similar to that of the Romish Church, concerning the impossibility of salvation without baptism, allowed lay persons to baptize in cases of great necessity; but afterwards they obtained clearer notions on the subject.

The minister is directed to perform the office of private baptism by repeating the Lord's Prayer and any other collects of public baptism which the exigence will permit, amongst which, the prayer for the sanctification of the water, being an important part of the office in the primitive Church, is not to be omitted; he is then to pour water upon it, as it is considered that the child in its sickness could not bear immersion. One of the rubrics here states, "that the child so baptized, is lawfully and sufficiently baptized, and ought not to be baptized again," lest any one should imagine that the Sacrament administered in this concise manner is not complete, and the child not made a Christian, or should think or say the child is only half-christened, as people sometimes mistakenly express themselves. It then proceeds to direct that if the child lives, it is to be brought into the church, that if the minister himself baptized the child, he may testify it to the congregation, or that if he did not, he may require if the Sacrament was rightly performed, and if so, in like manner notify to the congregation the validity of the baptism, and receive the child into the flock of Christian people.

There is a remarkable omission at the end of this office, namely, of the admonition to the sureties to bring the child to be confirmed by the bishop. As it was probably accidental, it is the opinion of an eminent ritualist, that the minister may give a direction from

himself to the same effect, and thus keep up to the supposed intention of the Church, without transgressing any written rule.

THE MINISTRATION OF BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, AND ABLE TO ANSWER FOR THEMSELVES.

This office was inserted in the liturgy at its last review. After the several nations had become Christian, baptism was always administered to children; but the growth of Anabaptism and Quakerism during the great Rebellion, rendered this office for adult baptism necessary, and now, though not often required in this country, is useful for baptizing of natives in our colonies. There is a distinct office for adults, more being required in their baptism than in that of infants; for they, being capable to receive instruction, declare their faith and exercise an actual repentance, our Church directs that they be first taught and catechized, which of old lasted all the forty days of Lent; and then that they be examined concerning their faith and repentance, Luke, iii. 8—11. Finally, the persons themselves are advised according to the primitive discipline, to prepare for this seal of remission by fasting and prayer, and a serious consideration of the covenant into which they are about to enter.

There is much similarity in this form and that for baptism for infants. With the full persuasion that baptism is our spiritual regeneration, and that God's sacraments have their effects, when the receiver does not put any bar against them, the compilers of this office for those solely who *truly repent and believe* in riper years, adopted the almost entire form which had been previously appropriated to infants; upon the plain principle that in *such a case*, all which is affirmed of infants may be equally affirmed of adults. The

offices differ in the portion of Scripture chosen ; here it being that part of the Gospel\* where Nicodemus is taught the mode of entering the Messiah's kingdom, outwardly by water, and assured of the mighty privileges of the new birth, conveyed thereby from the Spirit. The addresses are put to the individual himself, instead of the God-parents, who, in this case, attend only as witnesses of the engagement, and undertake no more than to remind him hereafter of the vow and profession made in their presence, the chief part of the charge being delivered at the last by the minister to the baptized person.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CATECHISM.

SCRIPTURE sanctions instruction in elementary truth by catechizing. The practice is as old as the days of the apostles ; St. Luke, in the first chapter of his Gospel, says, that he thought it fit to write to Theophilus, "that those mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," or as the original Greek may more properly be translated, "wherein thou hast been *catechized*," which implies that St. Luke's Gospel is an historical exposition of the catechism, which Theophilus had learned when he was first made a Christian. We have more than the mere testimony of St. Luke for the facts which he relates ; we have the express information from him that these facts formed the *catechetical* instructions which were learnt by the early converts to Christianity.

\* John iii. 5. "The general consent of antiquity agrees in the *literal* interpretation of these words."—HOOKER, *Eccles. Pol.* B. 5.

The Catechism has by some been assigned to Dean Nowel, by others to Bishop Poinet. In any case Cranmer appears to have revised and digested it, not without the able co-operation of Ridley. The part containing the explanation of the sacraments was added in the reign of James I., and is from the pen of Bishop Overall.

It is not merely for children, and to be laid aside entirely when we grow up, though this mistake is very prevalent. It contains an explanation of such things as the Bible tells us are to guide us throughout our lives, and to lead us to heaven when this life is past. We should have always before our eyes the solemn engagements of our baptismal covenant. It is too much the custom of the present day to despise elementary instruction; and many persons, elated with their fanciful advancement in spiritual things, consider that the strong meats of Christian manhood alone suit them, although their life proves that they have never yet, as "babes in Christ," had their souls nourished with a proper supply of the milk of the word, the simplest truths of the Gospel. It contains all the essential requisites for the foundation of a correct belief in sound doctrine, and the consequent formation of a holy life. It is drawn up under five separate heads, wherein, (without entering into the more abstruse and difficult questions of religious controversy; without puzzling the infant mind, or any inquirer after truth, with any subtleties of doctrine, such as are more likely to impede rather than advance his progress at the outset of his spiritual course,) there are clearly laid down all those points which may be considered necessary for the foundation of the practical piety of a true believer. The five heads under which it may be divided are as follows:—1st, The nature of the baptismal covenant, with which the Catechism opens;

2nd, The articles of belief, with a short explanation; 3rd, The commandments, with their spiritual application, as set forth in our duty to God and to our neighbour; 4th, The Lord's prayer, with the meaning and purport of it, as embodying the whole nature and duty of prayer; and 5th, An explanation of the two sacraments.

The baptismal covenant consists of two parts; the one on Christ's part, who engages to secure for the baptized the privileges or blessings promised to all his true members; the other on their parts, undertaking to renounce the service of sin, to believe the word of God, and obey it. They are then asked, whether they "do not think they are bound to believe and do as it has been promised for them?" And when we consider that nothing has been promised for them but what they must believe and do for themselves, if they would wish for the salvation of their souls, we see the propriety of the answer which they are taught to make, "Yes, verily, and by God's help, so I will;" that is, by God's help, I will renounce the service of sin, and I will believe the word of God, and obey it.

The world is called "wicked," because the generality of the world are wicked, 1 John v. 19; and Christians are elected out of the world to be a chosen generation, a peculiar people, Eph. iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 9. It is called a wicked world, to show how far we are to renounce it, namely, in all such cases in which it would draw us into any wickedness, for the sake of anything which we desire or enjoy in it.

Concerning each of the things which we renounce in baptism, we do not undertake what is beyond our power, for we do not engage that the temptations of the devil shall never beset or molest us; that the vain show of the world shall never appear inviting to us; that our corrupt nature shall never prompt or induce

us to evil ; but we undertake what, through the grace of God, though not without it, is in our power ; that we will not, either designedly or carelessly, give these our spiritual enemies needless advantages against us ; and that, with whatever advantage they may at any time attack us, we will never yield to them, but always resist them with our utmost prudence and strength. This is the renunciation here meant, and the office of baptism expresses it more fully, where we engage “so to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, that we will not follow or be led by them.”

It may be useful to dwell a little on these expressions. *Calling me to this state of salvation* ; admitting us at our baptism into that holy religion which we profess, and by which we enjoy all the necessary means of salvation, Rom. i. 16 ; 2 Tim. iii. 15. *Through Jesus Christ* ; we are said to be called to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ, because unless it were for the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, we could not be saved ; for it is his blood alone, (Acts xx. 28 ; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19,) which has made an infinite satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, (Rom. v. 10 ; 1 John ii. 2,) so that we are redeemed from everlasting punishment ; and it is by his pleading with the Father his merits in our behalf, (Heb. ix. 24 ; vii. 25 ; xii. 24,) that we are capable of being made partakers of eternal happiness. *I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue, &c.* ; by the grace of God is here meant that influence and assistance of God’s Holy Spirit, which He has promised to give us upon our devout prayer to Him for it ; which grace, concurring with our own diligent endeavours, doth render the conditions of the Gospel not only possible, but in some measure easy to be performed. We pray for God’s grace to continue us in a state of salvation ; because, unless God’s grace doth

remain with us, we may fall into a state of total apostacy and unbelief of our Saviour, and so be debarred even of the means of salvation ; or, if He doth not afford us grace to perform the conditions required by the Gospel, we can have no pretences to the promises of it.

The next division of the Catechism is the Creed. After persons have been taught the nature of the covenant entered into in their behalf at their baptism, and acknowledged their obligation to keep it, the next thing they require to learn is, what is *that* word of God which they are to believe and obey : and first, what are they to believe; for a right faith must always be the foundation of a holy life. The *Apostles'* Creed is here inserted, because it is the shortest and completest, and therefore the best adapted for the infant mind ; it sets about supposing no doubts or difficulties, and seems but little calculated to create any; and the leading and essential points of doctrine which it teaches, are summed up in the short explanation which follows, namely, the existence of three persons in the Divine Essence, and their co-operation in the economy of grace undertaken for the salvation of lost mankind. In it we acknowledge our lost estate by nature, since if it were otherwise, we would have needed no Redeemer ; as well as our uncleanness and unholiness, or we would have needed no Sanctifier. We are taught to look upon Christ himself as God, whence we may be led to trust in him, as our Saviour, with more undoubting confidence.

The Commandments occur next in order, because it is upon this knowledge of God as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier, that we are, as upon a good foundation, to raise the superstructure of a holy life. These commandments were originally given by God to Moses, for the regulation of the moral conduct

of the Israelites, at the time when He gave also the ceremonial law. The latter is now annulled, the end of it being answered ; but the tables of the moral law, being, in their very nature, of eternal obligation, were all of them enforced with increased spiritual strictness by Christ and his apostles. In her summary of the commandments, the Church adopts the comprehensive principle of interpretation established by our Divine founder ; and it is impossible for human language to convey a more full, faithful, plain, and simple transcript of the spiritual law of God \*.

From the consciousness of our inability to keep the commandments of God in all their extent and strictness, we must by no means excuse ourselves in the neglect of them. We must be hungering and thirsting after *perfect* righteousness, though in this life we shall never attain to it ; and a *perfect* conformity to the likeness of Christ must be the object of our desires and endeavours here, if we hope to rise up in his likeness hereafter. The Gospel besides, whilst it co-operates with our experience in affirming our natural inability to keep the commandments, instructs us from whom and by what means the ability of keeping them is to be procured (John xv. 5 ; 2 Cor. xii. 9 ; Phil. iv. 13 ; John xvi. 24) ; in strict accordance with which, the Church here directs us next, in the fourth division of her Catechism, in the use and nature of prayer, as a means whereby we may obtain the grace of God to help and strengthen us in the path of duty.

Besides his word and prayer, God has instituted, as the distinguishing ordinances of his religion, the holy sacraments, to be the appointed vehicles of his favour and benediction, and the instruments whereby

\* See *The Church's Care for the Religious Instruction of her Children*, a Sermon, by Bishop MANT.

the principle of spiritual life is to be planted, perpetuated, and strengthened in our hearts. Our Church, accordingly, next bestows attention upon these institutions.

OUR CHURCH *differs from the Romish as to the number of the sacraments.* The Romish Church recognises five, besides baptism and the Lord's supper, namely, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, matrimony, and holy orders; and anathematizes every one who shall say of either of these that it is not truly and properly a sacrament\*. None of these latter, however, have the distinguishing marks of a sacrament, and they were not fixed to be so by the authority of the Romish Church till a few hundred years ago.

That Baptism and the Lord's supper are sacraments appears evident. *There is in both an outward and visible sign*, namely, water in baptism, bread and wine in the Lord's supper. 2nd, There is an inward and spiritual grace signified and conveyed by these signs; the washing of regeneration by the one, (Tit. iii. 5,) the body and blood of Christ by the other, (1 Cor. x. 16.) 3rd, *There is for both a divine institution*,—for Baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19;—for the Lord's supper, Luke xxii. 19, 20; see also 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 4th, *They were both ordained as means whereby to convey their several graces to us, and as a pledge to assure us of them.* Baptism to regenerate us, (John iii. 5; Tit. iii. 5;) the Lord's supper to communicate to us the body and blood of Christ, (1 Cor. x. 16.) For which reason, lastly, *they are generally necessary to salvation.* All Christians have a right to them, nor may any, without hazard of missing these graces, refuse to use them, who have the opportunity of being partakers of them; (see John iii. 5; Mark, xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xi. 24.)

\* For a refutation of these pretended sacraments, see TOME'S *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*; Art. 25.

In the explanation of the baptismal covenant in the beginning of the Catechism, we learn that the God-parents promise *three* things in the infant's name; repentance, faith, and obedience; but in that at the end of it, two only are stated to be required; the third, namely, obedience or keeping God's commands, and walking in them all the days of our life, *being included in the two former*, as being a part of repentance, and the fruit of faith.

The Lord's supper is said to be ordained for the *continual* remembrance of Christ's death, because it is a remembrance which is not to determine after a certain time, as that of the paschal supper did, or to be celebrated only once a year, but is to continue to be kept up by this holy sacrament to the very end of the world, (1 Cor. xi. 26; compare Acts i. 11; John xiv. 3.)

That the body and blood of Christ are *verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful*, does not favour the doctrine of transubstantiation; by the expression we understand merely that the benefits of our Redeemer's death are truly received by the faithful believer and worthy communicant *alone*; such alone shares in the life and strength derived from his incarnation and death, and through faith becomes, by a vital union, one with him; "a member," as St. Paul expresses it, "of his flesh and of his bones," (Eph. v. 30;) certainly not in a literal sense, (which yet the Romanists might as well assert, as that we eat his flesh in a literal sense,) but in a spiritual and figurative one.

With regard to our preparation for the Lord's supper, the Church hath comprehended under the three heads of repentance, faith, and charity, the three principal subjects of our self-examination; but as to any particular method to be taken, or time to be spent in

it, we have no command; it is left to every one's prudence and voluntary piety. They who live in a constant practice of religion and virtue are always fit for the sacrament, and may, if the call be sudden, by sufficiently reflecting for a few moments, know that they are fit. Persons who live in any sin, may as readily know that they are not; and it is only in doubtful cases that any length of consideration is necessary to satisfy us about this matter. But it must be extremely useful for all persons, not only to be attentive to their ways constantly, but to look back upon them frequently: and as things which have no certain reason fixed for them are very apt to be neglected, we should fix upon this as one certain reason for as particular an inspection into the state of our hearts and lives as possible, joining with it suitable meditations, resolutions, and devotions. And in this work we must be careful neither to hurry over any part thoughtlessly, nor lengthen it wearisomely; and in our examination, we must be especially careful neither to flatter, nor yet to affright ourselves, but observe impartially what is right in us, thank God, and take the comfort of it; acknowledge what is wrong, beg pardon, and amend it; for without amendment, being ever so sorry will avail nothing.

The Church in a rubric directs "the curate of every parish diligently upon Sundays and holydays, *after the second lesson at evening prayer, openly in the Church* to instruct and examine the children, &c.;" and in one of the canons is more explicit, enjoining he shall do so "upon every Sunday and holyday for half an hour and more \*."

\* A valuable quotation on this subject from Archdeacon Bayly will be found in the notes to Bishop JEBB's *Primary Charge*. See also Bishop JOLLY's *Observations on the Sunday Services*; Introduction, pages 30, 31.

"Public catechizing," says the author of a tract lately pub-

Many advantages would result from thus catechizing openly in the church during Divine service, both to the young people, and to the congregation. To the children, inasmuch as it would prove an additional incentive to their teachers in the schools to teach them more diligently; to themselves, to learn more attentively the Catechism, as well as other courses of instruction; and to the congregation also advantage would result, inasmuch as it would bring before their notice, and force as it were upon their thoughts, what would often more edify them than any formal addresses from the pulpit—the simple, but important rudiments of Christian knowledge which the Catechism presents; and which, though they were once instructed in, yet owing to the business and troubles of worldly duties, they in many cases retain but a faint, if any impression.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION.

IN Acts viii. 12—17, we find that when the Samaritans had been converted and baptized by Philip, a deacon, or inferior minister in the Church, the apostles thought it necessary, as the chief rulers of the Church in those days, to send two of their own number, that by imposition of hands, and prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they might confirm and perfect the Samaritans in that which the grace of the same Spirit had begun in their baptism. And the apostles appear

lished, “in the better days of the English Church, was not wont to be so lightly esteemed as it now is; on the contrary, it was an office which even our bishops and greatest divines did not think it beneath them to perform.”

to have done this without any deliberation or decree, as in a case entirely new might have been expected ; but to have sent Peter and John as a matter of course, and in compliance with a custom already established. We are again told (Acts xix.) that after the Ephesians had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, that St. Paul, an apostle, and the head of the Gentile Church, laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them ; and answerably to this practice seems to have been the elementary religious instruction in that early age ; for in Heb. vi. the same apostle, among "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," among these things which he describes as the foundation of Christian instruction, makes special mention of the doctrine of baptisms *and of laying on of hands*, or as we term it *Confirmation*, as two distinct and separate ordinances. Consequently, from the days of the apostles to the present, it has always been the order in the Catholic Church, that those who have partaken of baptism should be confirmed in the faith with prayer and the *laying on of hands*. In accordance with this, our Church has appointed her office for confirmation of those who have been previously baptized, which office is to be performed by the bishops alone, as successors of the apostles, and not by the inferior clergy, who though they may baptize, are never authorized to administer confirmation ; in the same manner as the apostles alone administered this rite at first, though Philip and the rest of the inferior order of ministers were appointed to baptize.

This ordinance seems especially needful for those who have received baptism as infants, who should now in their own person renew that covenant which was before made in their names. It is intended as a solemn ratification on their part of their vows of obedience, and to be also a means of obtaining the

necessary strength and assistance from God for the keeping of them. The laying on of hands of the apostles was accompanied indeed by miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost ; these, however, being only necessary in the infant days of the Church, for propagating and establishing the Christian faith, have long since ceased, and to them we make no pretensions. But although the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost are now withholden, yet He has promised to bestow what is a much more valuable, though less remarkable blessing, his ordinary and saving graces, to those who seek them after the manner of God's appointment. They who receive Him are no longer endued with power to cast out devils, to speak with new tongues, to tread on serpents, and to drink poison without being hurt, or to lay hands on the sick and recover them ; but He gives power to cast out the devil of lust, to throw down the pride of Lucifer, to triumph over spiritual enemies, to cure a diseased soul, to be unharmed by the power of temptation, of evil examples, and of evil company ; these are the works of the Spirit now, and that we may perform such works, we ought earnestly to seek Him\*.

It has been objected against this ordinance, that so many are no better for it ; but this same reasoning might be applied to every ordinance of religion,—you may do away with all worship and prayer, with baptism, and the Lord's supper, because numbers partake of and join in these services, who continue never the better. The Lord's supper, as well as confirmation, may be administered to a hundred persons, not one half of whom may receive any spiritual benefit ; but if ten persons are benefited in their souls, the ordinance has proved effectual to them, and probably if we could read the hearts of the others, we should

find some good cause why the grace of God took no effect upon them.

Of persons to be confirmed, the Church requires that they be of years of discretion, that is to say, of a capacity to understand the nature of their baptismal covenant, what God therein promises to us, and what we are thereby obliged to believe and to do, in obedience to his will; 2nd, That they be not only capable of this knowledge, but be actually instructed in these things; 3rd, That being hereby brought to a clear sense of what was done for them by their godfathers and godmothers at their baptism, they be now ready and desirous in their own persons to ratify and confirm the same; and lastly, that in testimony of their sincere resolutions to make good what they here promise and vow, they do now truly repent of their sins, and steadfastly resolve, by the grace of God, to go on in a constant obedience to God's commands unto their lives' end.

Every one is required to have a godfather or a godmother as a witness of their confirmation, for the same reasons as they are at the baptism of a person who is an adult; in both cases they are witnesses of the engagements which the persons so baptized or confirmed lay themselves under, and consequently will be proper and continued monitors to check or reclaim them, should they at any time hereafter be tempted to abandon the interest of Christ, and take part with his enemies.

When notice is given of confirmation, each curate has to certify the names of such in his parish as are fit to be presented to be confirmed; for the bishop cannot personally examine each candidate, and can only refuse such as have not a certificate: but the parochial clergy having the matter wholly in their power, and induced by the mercies of God and the love

of souls, will take special pains, when the time of confirmation approaches, and use their influence with parents and other guardians of children to second their endeavours, that the persons to be confirmed may be sufficiently instructed in the nature of their baptismal covenant, and be thoroughly convinced of the necessity of thus taking it personally upon themselves, and of the obligations they be under to lead suitable lives for the future. It is of great importance that we should, by means of this ordinance, renew our baptismal vows, for in order to receive the benefits of baptism, we must lay claim to the covenant which conveys them ; we must ratify, as soon as we are able, what was promised in our name by others before we were able, and done for us then only on presumption that we would make it our own deed afterwards. And it is very fit and useful that we should do so in the form and manner prescribed by the office of our Church. It is fit that when persons have been properly instructed by their parents, friends, and ministers, they should gratefully acknowledge them to have faithfully performed that kindest duty. It is fit, that, before they are admitted to the holy communion, they should give public assurance to the Church of their Christian belief, and Christian purposes. This will be also very useful to themselves, for they are just entering into a world of temptations, with no experience, and little knowledge to guard them, and much youthful rashness to expose them ; the authority of others over them is beginning to lessen, their own passions to increase, "evil communications" to have great opportunities of "corrupting good manners," and strong impressions of one kind or another will be made on them very soon. What then can be more necessary, or more likely to preserve their innocence, than to form the most deli-

berate resolutions of acting right, and to declare them in a manner thus adapted to move them at the time, and be remembered by them afterwards, in the presence of God, of a number of his ministers, and of a large congregation of his people, assembled with more than ordinary solemnity for that very purpose?

THE ANSWER OF THE CANDIDATES TO THE QUESTION OF THE BISHOP, whether they solemnly ratify their baptismal vows, contained in the short words, "I do," is soon said, but it comprehends much; and if they repeat it without sincerity, it is lying to God; if without attention, it is trifling with Him. They should watch over their hearts therefore, and let them go along with their lips; they should call to mind often this certain truth, and fix it in their souls, that if breaking a solemn promise to men be a sin, breaking that which they make thus deliberately to God would be unspeakably a greater sin.

THE VERSICLES AND RESPONSES which follow are very appropriate. Scripture teaches, and experience proves, that "of ourselves we can do nothing," (John xv. 5,) that we "are not sufficient," (2 Cor. iii. 5,) without God's continual aid, which He hath promised to "give to those that ask him," Luke xi. 13. Now confirmation is appointed for the strengthening us against our spiritual enemies, which though they be many and great, there is no reason to despair of obtaining strength to resist them, for "our help is in the name of the Lord," who is able and willing to help them that call upon his name.

THE PRAYER occurring next is an invocation of the Holy Spirit, found in a ritual of the year 494, but probably much older, and has been used by our Church for above 1200 years. It first commemorates God's mercy already bestowed, and then petitions for an increase of it. We pray for his "manifold gifts of

grace," that is, manifold gracious gifts, which we enumerate in seven particulars, taken from Isai. xi. 2, that we may be wise and intelligent, prudent and courageous, discreet in our choice, devout in our duties, and pious in our lives.

Laying on of hands is an ancient ceremony, (Gen. xlvi. 14; Num. xxvii. 18; Mat. xix. 13; Mark x. 16; Luke iv. 40; Acts viii. 15; Heb. vi. 2;) and it hath been highly esteemed in the Church always. *The Romanists indeed administer confirmation by other rites of their own devising, and have laid aside this primitive one, which our Church prudently restored*, and the custom is approved as apostolical by Luther, Calvin, and their followers, though they rashly abolished it as having been abused. By it our Church by no means assigns to the bishops the conferring the Holy Spirit arbitrarily on whom they please; but only as petitioning God for that blessing from above which He alone can give, and which we hope He will give more readily for the prayers of those whom He hath placed over his people, unless their own unworthiness prove an impediment.

In the COLLECT AFTER THE LORD'S PRAYER the bishop prays that what he has done may not be an empty and insignificant sign, and this with so noble a mixture of humility and faith, as well agrees with the purest times. Depending upon the faith and promise of God, he knows that the graces he has now been conferring are as sure a consequence of the office he has performed, as if he had in himself power to give them; but still he considers from whom those gifts and graces come, and who alone can preserve and secure them; and therefore, under a due sense of this, he makes his humble supplications, that as "he has now laid his hands upon these people (after the example of the apostles) to certify them thereby of God's

"favour and goodness towards them, the fatherly hand of God may be ever over them, his Spirit ever be with them, and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of his word, that they may in the end obtain everlasting life."

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

MARRIAGE was ordained by God in paradise ; our first parents were joined together by God himself, yea, "God blessed them." Accordingly among all their descendants, the different nations in the world, there has been some religious way of entering into this state, in consequence and testimony of this Divine institution. Among Christians especially, from the first ages of the Church, those who have been married have always been joined together by some ecclesiastical person, and both in the Greek and Latin Churches, offices were drawn up in the most early times for the religious celebration of this holy ordinance, but being afterwards mixed with superstitious rites, our Reformers thought fit to lay them aside, and to draw up a form more decent and grave, and more agreeable to the usage of the primitive Church.

The following judicious arrangements have been made by our Church with regard to marriage. That none but a lawful minister shall solemnize it ; and to prevent secret or improper marriages, that the banns or proclamation of those that are to be married together be published in the Church three several Sundays or holydays ; that all marriages shall be celebrated in the day time, between the hours of eight and twelve ; and for the greater solemnity of this holy rite, it is ex-

pressly required that it be celebrated in the Church, the place of God's special presence, before whom the parties make this religious covenant, that the sacredness of the place may make them more reverent in entering into, and more careful in keeping it; and for the better assurance whereof, it is enjoined to be done in the presence of their friends and neighbours, who may testify their consent to, and be continual witnesses of it, and join with the minister in prayers for a blessing upon it. The Church also shows her wisdom and piety by giving previously a strict CHARGE to THE PARTIES themselves, uttered in tremendous words, to induce them to confess if there be any lawful impediment to hinder their union.

The impediments to lawful marriage in this country (besides imbecility which invalidates marriage as it does every other engagement,) are only three. 1st, A preceding marriage still existing; 2nd, Relationship either by blood or marriage within certain degrees, either mentioned expressly in Levit. xviii., or fairly deducible therefrom; 3rd, Both or one of the parties not being of the age of twenty-one years, and the parents or guardians expressing their dissent.

When the parties reside in different parishes, the rubric appoints that the banns be published in both parishes, and the curate of the one is not to join them in marriage without a certificate of the banns being therein asked from the curate of the other parish. In some respects the rubric is deficient, which however has been supplied by the 62nd and 102nd Canons, and by the English statute 26 Geo. II., or the Irish 9 Geo. II., which has settled, that to belong to a parish, one of the parties must have dwelt in it for four weeks immediately preceding. Any clergyman convicted of solemnizing marriage in any other place than a church or chapel, and within the hours of eight and

twelve in the morning, is adjudged guilty of felony, and liable to transportation; and such marriage is null and void. This does not extend to special licenses granted by the proper authority.

The design of THE PREFACE WITH WHICH THE OFFICE BEGINS is to prevent that vain and irreverent mirth too frequent at this service, rendering it occasionally the most painful which ministers have to celebrate: and who that hears that this ordinance is of such sanctity, such Divine origin, and such sublime signification, of such infinite importance to mankind, bringing the heart under pure and sanctified control, instituted, not in our present degraded state; but when our race was innocent—setting forth the mystical union between Christ and his Church, hallowed by the Saviour's presence and performance of his *first* miracle, can be not only so irreverent, but so devoid of shame, as not to lay aside their levity on so solemn an occasion?

THE MUTUAL CONSENT OF THE PARTIES IS ASKED, because marriage being a civil compact, consent of the persons is essential,—and it is a beautiful and touching imitation of the gracious concurrence of consent in the patriarch Israel and Rebekah;—after which they give each other their troth, that is, give a SOLEMN ASSURANCE TO EACH OTHER that they design to be husband and wife, and to live together in a faithful discharge of those rules and obligations which God's law requires in that state.

By their marriage covenant the man is obliged to “love” his wife, (Eph. v. 25,) here mentioned first, because if the man have this affection, he will perform with delight all other duties; he must “comfort” her, which is the same that St. Paul expresses by “cherishing,” (Eph. v. 29,) and implies here that he must support his wife under all the sorrows and infirmities to which the tenderness of her sex often makes her

liable. He is to "honour" her, as St. Peter directs, (1 Pet. iii. 7,) for though the wife, as he says, is the "weaker vessel," yet she is not to be despised for those unavoidable weaknesses which God has been pleased to annex to her constitution, but rather respected for her usefulness to the man's comfort. He must "keep her in sickness and in health," that is, as St. Paul says, "nourish her," Eph. v. 29, or afford her all necessaries in her condition. Lastly, he must be faithful to her, and forsaking all others keep himself only unto her so long as they both shall live," (Mal. ii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. vii. 10,) shunning those fatal destroyers of the chief design of marriage, adultery, polygamy, and divorce.

There is no difference in the duties, nor, consequently, in the terms of the covenant, between a man and his wife, except that the woman is obliged to "obey" and "serve" her husband; nor is this a difference of man's devising, but is expressly ordered by God himself, who, in the same places of Scripture where He enjoins husbands to love their wives, commands the wives to be "subject" and "obedient" unto their husbands, Eph. v. 22, 24; Col. iii. 18; Tit. ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 1, 5.

The mirth that sometimes takes place at this part of the compact is peculiarly ill timed, for if considered aright, what is this subjection of the woman but the sad remembrances of that fatal transgression which drove us from the eternal Father, covered our souls with defilement, and overwhelmed us with a curse from heaven, and which, had it not been for the compassion, the humiliation, and the propitiating death of the Saviour, would have overthrown the hopes of mankind for evermore! With regard to the nature of the obedience exacted from the woman, it is not meant that she is to be the slave of her hus-

band; but, to prevent disputes, and promote peace and harmony, it is needful that one should submit, and God hath decided which it shall be. The dominion of the man over the woman is like the rule exercised by the soul over the body. Man and wife shine together, like the sun and moon, in their proper spheres of domestic government \*. If more reverence be due from her to him as the head, more honour is or should be rendered in return from him to her, as unto the weaker vessel. There should be no bitterness on his part in upholding the rank entrusted to him by God, nor any backwardness on her part to yield in such sort, as shall manifest "the meekness of a godly matron."

There is early mention in Sacred History of THE GIVING OF A RING; being anciently a seal by which orders were signed, and which was affixed on property for security, it was a sign that the party to whom it was given was admitted to the nearest friendship and the highest trust, (Gen. xli. 42;) and hence it came to be a token of love, (Luke xv. 22.) The use of it, in Christian espousals, is mentioned by one of the early fathers, and it is a chaste and beautiful emblem of that form wherein no end can be found. It is an artless and impressive pledge of Christian attachment, and should be a perpetual monitor that the marriage vows be religiously observed, and the promises faithfully performed. On the delivering of the ring, the HUSBAND AVOWS THAT from that hour HE ADMITS HIS AFFANCED BRIDE TO A FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL THAT IS HIS DUE, in person, in station, and in property,—and he makes this promise in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is, by his Christianity, and before the Trinity as witness thereto, who, if he break it, will be the avenger of this perjury; for these words, calling God to witness, turn the promise into a solemn oath.

\* JEREMY TAYLOR, Serm. 18.

That the Church obliges the bridegroom to make an idol of his bride, by saying that he worships her, is an objection made by persons very ignorant of our language, as otherwise they would be aware that the purport of the old English word *worship* is honourable regard; thus the passage in 1 Sam. ii. 30, "Them that honour me I will honour," is rendered in the old translation of the Bible, "Them that worship me I will worship," yet no one ever imagined that God was represented as paying adoration to his creatures; and, in common discourse, similar expressions are retained, as your worship, worshipful. The meaning of the phrase, "with my body I thee worship," in this service is, *I not only give thee a right to my body, but that in the honourable and worshipful way of a wife, as mistress of the family, and to share in all the honours which are due or belong to my person. I receive thee into a state of honourable wedlock.*

PRAYER follows next. Before our Saviour's time, covenants were ever ratified with blood; but under the Gospel, in lowly distrust of our own strength, we perfect our covenant with prayer for divine support. The Most High is accordingly implored to bestow his blessing upon the contracting parties, that they may dwell together faithfully, and ever remain in love and peace through Jesus Christ. Isaac and Rebekah are selected as examples, because Isaac was the only patriarch who had not a plurality of wives, but lived with Rebekah according to the Divine ordinance in the primitive institution of marriage.

After the covenant has been made, and a blessing begged upon it, occurs THE CHURCH RATIFICATION thereof in the name of God. This is done, 1st, By declaring the authority on which the covenant is founded, namely, the divine authority; for the rite is of God's own instituting, the vow hath been made in his pre-

sence and the promise made to Him and in his name, and accordingly his servant proclaims in our Saviour's own words, (Matt. xix. 6,) "Those whom God hath joined, no man may put asunder;" none but God, by death, can untie this holy knot; 2nd, The presbyter, having called in those present to bear witness to this covenant, by repeating the manner in which it was made, officially pronounces with the voice of authority that they be man and wife. These two parts, of giving their hands and declaring their marriage, is peculiar to our Church. 3rd, He solemnly intercedes for them, desiring, in imitation of the blessing prescribed in the book of Numbers, the three Persons of the Godhead to keep them from evil, and give them grace so to live holily together in this life, that when they come into that world where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," they may meet in happiness in everlasting life.

The remaining part of the office is a HYMN OF GRATEFUL PRAISE, next the LORD'S PRAYER, afterwards SUPPLICATIONS chosen out of the Psalms, and put into the form of responses, that their assembled friends may all show their love to the parties by publicly joining in them; then follow THREE PRAYERS TO BE USED BY THE MINISTER ALONE, the first, for spiritual blessings on the newly married couple; the second, that they may have progeny, (the blessing which God pronounced upon our first parents, and which our Church always directs to ask for, except when the advanced age of the parties render the fulfilment of our request most improbable,) and that they may live to see their offspring brought up as Christians. In the last prayer, after rehearsing the inseparable character of holy wedlock, God is importuned to grant that they may perform those duties which, St. Paul informs us, the estate of matrimony mystically represents. Then

there is given them AN EXHORTATION on those duties, in the beautiful language of St. Paul and St. Peter, full of spiritual instruction, after which they are directed to partake of the Lord's supper as soon as opportunity may be afforded\*.

A change has been lately made in England in the law of marriage, by which persons can go before a parochial officer, a layman, and make a civil contract of marriage, with as little reference to God as one would have on buying an estate. The ignorant and barbarous people in foreign lands have some notion of the solemnity of the marriage rite, and invoke the blessing of their tutelary gods,—and shall we of this civilized Christian country forget this, and be the first, in the self-sufficiency of our own false opinions, to banish, in this most important change of life, all the thoughts of God and religion,—when we take to ourselves the wife of our bosom, shall we supplicate no blessing of the Lord? When she who is to be for ever the companion of our journey through life, the partner of our joys, and our sorrows, our weakness, and our strength, our riches and our poverty, is made ours, shall be content to stand before *man* as the only witness, and thrust aside God? Shall we send forth no aspirations to the throne of grace, that what is commenced in this world may have its reference and conclusion in the next? If *sacred laws* have been found insufficient to secure the vows of fidelity, how shall *promises before man* avail? Will an *Englishwoman* discard the thought of God at a moment when such new and important duties are about to devolve upon her? Shall the bitter remembrance be allowed to haunt her, as the fearful pangs of travail in birth are approaching, that *God*, who alone can help, was set at

\* See observations by Dr. Comber and Bishop Sparrow, in Mant's edition of the Common Prayer.

nought on her entrance into the married state? When she is sorrowing over a child in danger, over a husband whose life is despaired of, shall she *then* have it to charge it upon herself, that it is a babe in whose behalf God was not sought after, a husband to whom she was not joined *before God*! No, by the usual notice of banns or of licence, she can come to her parish church as heretofore and invoke God's blessing, just as it has ever been the custom of the Church in times past\*.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE ORDER FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

VISITING the sick is a Christian duty, and great promises are annexed to the performance of it, Ps. xli; Matt. xxv. 34, 36; Jas. i. 27; Eccles. vii. 35. The primitive Christians were remarkable for this part of charity, but it is especially the duty of the clergy to visit the sick, a duty instituted and enjoined by God himself; "Is any sick among you," &c., Jas. v. 14, 15. The time for performing it is when any is sick, for then the parties have most need of comfort, advice, and prayers, to support them and procure aid for them, as also to prepare them for their last and great account: then also will they be more willing to hearken to good advice. Accordingly it has been the custom of the presbyters of the Church to visit the sick; and after praying for them, and, if necessary, reconciling them to the Church by the blessing of

\* Part of the above is from Rev. W. BENNET's *Sermons on Marriage*; see also *The Sanctuary of God*, by Rev. C. S. HASSELS.

There is a sermon on this subject by Archdeacon Berens, in his volume of *Village Sermons*; it is also published in a separate tract. A manual called *The Bridal Gift*, contains some simple yet instructive pieces under the heads of *Bridal Thoughts*, *Home Duties and Pleasures*, and *Future Reunion*.

absolution, to communicate to them the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. The sick person or his friends should therefore, in the beginning of his sickness, not waiting, as is too common, till the physicians have given him over, send for the minister, (who else, may not know of his sickness, or when it may be seasonable to visit,) he being most able to give counsel, and most likely to prevail, because God has appointed him for this office, Jas. v. 14.

The same passage of Scripture, it is true, directs the sick to be anointed with oil, the original object of which was, not to convey grace to the soul, (as the Church of Rome lays claim to do by their pretended sacrament of extreme unction,) but to save, or procure a recovery of the infirm, by remission of the temporal punishment which they had merited for their sins; but such miraculous cures having long ceased in the Church, using the sign was unnecessary, because the thing signified was done away. By this the sick do not receive any injury, because all the substantial parts of the office are retained, for on repentance, accompanied by the blessing and prayer of the minister, and the worthy reception of Christ's body and blood, they obtain remission of their sins.

This office commences with that Gospel sound, "PEACE." The messenger of peace, on his entrance into the abode of sorrow, is directed to bless in the name of his Lord all that are therein, and to PRAY the God of mercy that he would remember the precious blood of Jesus, which has been shed, and turn away his wrath from our iniquities. THE PETITIONS THAT FOLLOW are most suitable; for the sick and distressed creatures that come to Jesus for help, did generally use like supplications, Matt. xx. 30; ix. 27; xv. 22; xvii. 15; and since they prevailed with our Lord in his humiliation to pity, heal, and help those who used

them in those instances, we may with more comfort send them up to him now in his exaltation. There is also an especial suitableness in THE LORD'S PRAYER, so many of its petitions agree with the state of sickness; herein the afflicted man may show his love of God by desiring "his name may be hallowed;" his desires of heaven, by wishing that "his kingdom may come;" his submission to the divine pleasure, by praying "his will may be done;" herein he may beg earthly comforts in asking for his "daily bread;" he may crave pardon for the past, in beseeching God to "forgive his trespasses," &c., and express his charity, by declaring he "for-gives them that trespass against him;" herein he may testify his resolutions to amend, by requesting he may not be "led into temptation," and procure freedom from the punishment of sin, by praying to be "delivered from evil." In those needful petitions all present should join, as well as in THE RESPONSES WHICH FOLLOW.

The propriety of THE FIRST COLLECT is plainly perceptible: God hath commanded his people in their trouble to cry unto Him, and desire Him to look down from heaven, Deut. xxvi. 15; Isa. lxiii. 15; and he has promised to hear them, 1 Kings viii. 37; xl. 9, 3. There is danger that the enemy, Satan, may tempt the sick man, if he has lived carelessly, to despair; if piously, to presumption; if he be weak, to impatience; if he be wavering, to unbelief; if he be worldly, by unwillingness to die; if he be secure, to defer his repentance: we pray that God will preserve him from the danger of consenting to any of these temptations, and make him trust firmly in his mercy, and see clearly his own unworthiness, bear patiently what he hath so justly deserved, hold fast his good principles, and be willing to die when God pleaseth, and be diligent, while he lives, to repent sincerely; so shall he be kept in peace and safety, his mind shall be quiet, and his outward condition safe.

The petitions of THE SECOND COLLECT manifest the wisdom and piety of the Church. The sufferer and his friends may perhaps only desire present ease, and restoration to health; but since health itself would not be a mercy till the fatherly correction had effected that good end for which God sent it, we are directed to pray that God will sanctify it to him, so as to make him penitent and devout, humble and holy.

The Church is justifiable for treating her members as in a covenanted state, though this has been objected to by some; for unless it be an instance of a sinner who rejects the faith of Christ, and lives in defiance of God's laws, or a case of the merely moral man, or the worldling, or the formalist, we are bound so to treat them. This is the language of St. Paul to the churches to whom he writes; and our Lord reminds the Jews of his day, as the covenanted people, of their privileges *as such*, of their being the children of the kingdom,—of good and evil ones being in his church, in the parable of the net, and of the tares; and accordingly the Church presumes, unless an impenitent, a careless, or hypocritical state be discerned, that the sick man has, according to his profession at such a time, that trust in the Lord, without which, in some degree, it is impossible to please God.

THE EXHORTATION put into the mouth of the minister consists of two parts; the first states the *author of affliction*—every sickness God's visitation. *The ends for which it is sent*—either to try his patience, for example of others, or to correct and amend whatever offends his heavenly Father. *The manner in which he is to bear it*—with repentance, patience, confidence in God's mercy through Christ, humble thankfulness, entire submission. *The benefits of improving it*—helping forward the soul to eternal life. The second part consists of endeavouring to cheer the spirits of the sick

man by arguments, precepts, and examples. It directs him to that striking illustration of St. Paul, Heb. xii., that the correction of earthly parents is not a mark of hatred, but of love, much more then should the chastisement of our heavenly Father be looked upon as a token that He is dealing with us as with children. On the high ground of Christian duty, it is represented that as there is an entire sympathy between the head and the members, we must be conformed by sufferings of some kind, to Christ our Saviour. Next, the duty of self-examination is brought home, as to his baptismal vow, especially as to his faith in the vital truths of the Gospel. He is reminded of the solemn account to be rendered to God, and in consideration thereof is urged to try his heart and accuse and condemn himself, that he may avoid the condemning sentence of the just Judge. On account of the variety of men's tempers and cases, in time of sickness, it appears left to the discretion of the minister to direct as he sees the particular case requires; yet some general things, such as the following, are prescribed in the rubric\*: *Whether he repent truly of his sins*, Rom. iii. 23; and if he find the sick man examined slightly, or is not deeply sensible of the number, nature, and desert of his sins, not heartily grieved for them, or not steadfastly resolved, if he recover, to amend his life, the minister must impartially tell him of the danger of dying in that impenitent state, and labour to bring him to repentance now, or else he must perish for ever. God's minister must not fear any man's anger, or destroy him by concealing this necessary, though unpleasing truth from him; and every man ought to give his spiritual physician leave to be plain

\* Full and scriptural heads of examination on these several points will be found in THOMPSON's *Pastoralia*, which gives also a list of the treatises most useful for sick persons.

and impartial, since his own salvation depends upon it. *Whether he forgive those who have offended him;* for there is no duty more enforced in the Gospel than this, which even in the prayer our Lord has taught us is made the condition of God's forgiving us. (See the example of our Lord, Luke xxiii. 34; and his first martyr, Acts vii. 60; and our Lord's parable, Matt. xviii. 23, &c.) *Whether he be ready to forgive and make amends to those whom he has offended or injured;* for he who refuses to do this is not penitent for the injury done, but would do more if he had time and opportunity; and therefore he can expect nothing from that Judge who knows the tendency and temper of his mind. (See Col. iii. 35; Matt. v. 25.) Needful, therefore, is it, even for those who but suspect themselves of any wrongful deed, to examine themselves with all possible strictness, and by public acknowledgment and tender of satisfaction, to declare their unfeigned and hearty repentance.

It may at first sight seem out of place that the minister should direct the sick man to make his will, declare his debts, &c., seeing that it is a secular matter which has no relation to the spiritual concerns about which he comes; and yet experience shows the wisdom of the rule, aye, and its piety also. The affairs of intestates are generally left in so confused a manner, that great strifes and contests are often the result; some of the family left unprovided for, through want of assigning their portion, and creditors defrauded, for want of clearing or declaring debts. It is therefore wisely enjoined, that the minister should remind every one of settling his affairs before he dies, as he would avoid not only the loss of his effects in law suits, but chiefly that he may not occasion the disunion of the affections of his dearest relatives.

Let it not be supposed that the injunction of

“ moving the sick man, if of ability, to be liberal to the poor,” arises from any supposition that we can merit heaven by our alms’ deeds: heaven is too glorious to be bought by them, as we teach in opposition to the Romanists, 1 Pet. i. 18; yet God hath promised to reward them in heaven who relieve the poor on earth, and gives heaven only to such, Matt. xxv. 42, not for the merit of their charity, but of his free grace. The sick man is also to be moved to confess\* those sins which most trouble his conscience: men’s consciences are mostly very tender under the fear of approaching death; reflections on their former sins do then most sensibly affect them, and many scruples arise in their minds, either concerning some acts of injustice which they may have in the course of their lives committed, and may be at a loss to find out proper methods of restitution; or concerning other sins of a more heinous nature, which they are not certain they have pursued proper methods in repenting of. Upon these considerations the Church has ordered that the sick man be moved to make confession of such sins, to the end that by the spiritual advice and comfort which he may receive from the minister, his mind may be eased.

Our Church shows much wisdom and moderation in appointing THE ABSOLUTION to be used FOR THE SICK. *She neither has laid aside an ancient usage, very comfortable to the penitent soul, nor yet retained the corruptions which the Romish Church had introduced.* The declaration of God’s forgiveness in this service, as well as in other parts of our liturgy, is only conditional, on supposition of the sincerity of the penitent. The form here used is modelled in the scriptural style of expression, according to which a person says, that *he does what he only declares to be done.* “ Whosoever

\* On this subject, as well as that of Absolution, see pages 84 to 89.

sins ye remit," that is, declare to be remitted, for even the apostles could do no more, John xx. 21; "To whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it," adding immediately, to show that he pronounced this forgiveness ministerially, "in the person," that is, acting as the minister "of Christ," 2 Cor. ii. 10; see also Gen. xxvii. 37, and xii. 13. This style of speaking was well understood in our Lord's time, and therefore he used it in committing to his apostles the ministry of reconciliation. But the Church of Rome, taking advantage of this style, claims from these words a *judicial* power of forgiveness for her priests, pronouncing a curse on those who presume to say it is only *ministerial*. On the contrary, though we still retain the scriptural style of expression, yet we only use it as a directory, according to the rubric, "after this sort," and seldom the direct words, for fear of misapprehension. Similar is the language of the Westminster Confession of the dissenters.

There is a particularity in the form of absolution in this service, not in those of the daily and communion service, which is readily accounted for: the latter are addressed to a whole congregation, in which there may be many who are not penitent, and therefore not authorised to apply the declaration of pardon to themselves; while *this* is to be said before an individual *confessing his sins, and humbly and heartily desiring forgiveness at God's hand*. Is the ambassador of Christ to leave such a one in doubt? Is his commission so vague, his message so uncertain, that he is not to proclaim to such a broken-hearted penitent the sure mercy of him who willeth not the death of a sinner? If duly authorised ministers be God's ambassadors, surely they may speak in God's name; and their word, delivered according to his will, is to be taken as the voice of God\*.

It may be said that God, having declared in his written word that penitents are forgiven, no human voice is needed to assure us of this; but if such an opinion be correct, why did Jesus Christ expressly leave this authority to living men? Our Church puts forth no such impious pretension as that of judicially absolving from sin; but assuredly Christ has given power to his ministers to declare authoritatively to every penitent that God forgives him; and those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the Gospel, have their pardon pronounced, and, as it were, sealed to them through this ministration. However this may be ridiculed by a faithless and perverse generation, to one who feels the burden of his sin, the sentence of absolution pronounced by him to whom Christ has given this power, will prove as a precious balm to his wounded conscience. It is not in the word of his fellow sinners that he finds comfort; because *he* reads the mind of God in that word, and because in that declaration he discovers a provision which God himself has made to calm his fears, and to bring peace to his soul.

If further remarks were needed to exhibit the difference between the Romish Church and ours, we might instance that in specifying the authority in which the absolution is pronounced, *we name our Lord Jesus Christ: before the Reformation, it was that of St. Peter*; and in THE PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS our Church, instead of vaunting herself on the exercise of authority, casts herself, in the person of her minister, with all lowliness to the ground, beseeching God to ratify his act, and to declare He has done so by other visible testimonies of favour, by renewing in the sick person the graces of faith, hope, devotion, and sincere obedience.

THE PSALM WHICH SUCCEEDS is the 71st, which

deserves to be treasured up in the memory, so that we may cling to the comfort in the hours of trial, sadness, and death. It is so apt and proper to express the sick person's desires and wants, and at the same time to exercise his faith, to inflame his love, to uphold his patience, and revive his hope, that in the most ancient liturgies it occurs in this office. The five last verses were omitted in ours, as not being so suitable to one whose case is languishing and dangerous.

THE MINISTER BLESSES THE SICK PERSON, in taking, for aught he knows, his last leave of him, and for this there are provided three solemn forms; the first, directed to God the Son, principally designed to obtain pardon for sin by his death and passion; the second is a formal blessing in the name of God the Father, chiefly intended to procure the defence of his providence. The last (which was added at the last review of this office), is an address to the whole Trinity, being a paraphrase on that divine form, Num. vi. 24, 25, 26,

The invocation of the Saviour in the first of these forms is truly sublime. Precious is the name of Jesus in the hour of health and strength; precious in the hour of rebuke and unkindness from a harsh world; precious in the time of affliction, bereavement, and inward conflict; but how precious when the thought is brought home,—“I am never to leave this chamber again in the body!” then to hear the prayer ascend from one of God's authorised servants, “O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood, hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we most humbly beseech thee!” Judge of the warm thrill of holy joy which gushes from the heart at the prospect of being with *Him* and seeing *Him* face to face, who hath wrought for us an eternal redemption!

The Church, with motherly thoughtfulness, adds some prayers for particular cases of sickness; namely,

*a prayer for a sick child, a prayer when there appear-  
eth small hope of recovery, a commendatory prayer  
for a sick person at the point of departure, and a  
prayer for persons troubled in mind or conscience.* It  
may be noticed respecting the first of these prayers,  
that as the natural love of parents will direct them to  
use all human means for the recovery of their child,  
so the love inspired by their Christian profession in-  
structs them to turn the violence of their passion into  
fervent addresses to Him who gave it at first, and who  
only can preserve it. The faith of the Shunamite, 2  
Kings, iv., and of Jairus, Mark v. 22, Luke viii. 41,  
was rewarded by the restoration of their children,  
even after they were dead; and though we must not  
expect such a miracle now, yet if we pray with all  
due humility and faith, they will assist much in the  
cure, and may move God to spare them. Mark the  
tender and devout words of the prayer; whilst entreating  
God to look with mercy upon the much-beloved  
child, and to save his soul, yet, conscious that we  
know not what is best, we leave it to the same all-  
wise Being, either to prolong his life, and make him  
an instrument of his glory; or to receive him into  
those heavenly mansions, where the souls of them that  
sleep in Jesus enjoy everlasting rest and felicity.

The second prayer is suitable when any sudden  
disease puts the sick man beyond all hopes of recovery  
at the first attack, or when any, though visited with a  
lingering disease, have yet wretchedly deferred to send  
for a minister, till there is as little to be done for the  
setting forward of their salvation, as there is for the  
restoring of their bodily health.

There is Scripture sanction for commanding our  
departing souls to God. We know that when the dust  
returns to dust as it was, "the spirit returns to God  
who gave it," Eccles. xii. 7; and therefore our Saviour

himself, when he was expiring on the cross, cried out unto his Father, " Into thy hands I commend my spirit," Luke xxiii. 46 ; and that we are to imitate his holy example is evident from the practice of the first martyr, St. Stephen, who also at his death commended his soul into the hands of his Redeemer, Acts vii. 59 ; and accordingly the succeeding ages of the Church always observed the same religious rite.

The last prayer in this service is peculiarly suitable when any become melancholy through bodily distempers, or by evil principles are troubled by dismal apprehensions of God, or are too much disturbed in their inward peace and quiet through a dreadful sense of their former sins ; in which case the spiritual physician may discreetly apply the promises of God, and endeavour to obtain His consolation and mercy for the dejected penitent's deplorable state.

#### COMMUNION OF THE SICK.

There is not anything which requires explanation in this office ; I shall therefore only call attention to the judiciousness of the rubrics belonging to it—of that one in particular which requires that the sick person shall communicate last, lest in case of a contagious disease, danger should arise to others from drinking of the same cup with him.

Thus have we seen the Church's care to provide all necessaries for a sick person's salvation. It were an happy thing to see in the people an answerable diligence in the use of these ghostly offices ; that they would, when they are sick, send for the minister, not verbally only to comfort them, by rehearsing comfortable texts of Scripture, whether they belong to them or not, (which is not to heal the sick, but to tell them that they have no need of the spiritual Physician, by

which means precious souls perish, for whom Christ died,) but to search and examine the state of their souls, to show them their sins, to prepare them by ghostly counsel and penitential exercises for absolution, and the holy Communion, whereby they may find comfort, remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter ; and this should be done while the sick person hath strength and ability to attend, and join with him in these holy services. An idea is somewhat prevalent, that in the multitude of religious books, there is less cause for the attendance of a minister. These, however, may do very well as enabling a person to profit by the ministerial services ; but they are *no substitute* for his exhortations and intercession, who cometh in the name of Christ his Master. “ He that despiseth you despiseth me,” saith the Lord Jesus ; and the Holy Ghost, the Giver of spiritual life, who best knoweth the mode of operating on the heart, hath *commanded*, “ Is any sick ? let him send for the elders of the Church.” We sufficiently understand the shrinking of a delicate mind, and the nervousness of age, to make allowance for the hesitation which dreads the admission of one, sometimes a stranger, into the privacy of the chamber of the sick. But the best cure for this scrupulousness, is to consider, not the man, but his *office* ; to regard him simply as a bearer of grace from the Saviour, and not to imagine that anything he can speak, can of *itself* do good, but only so far as accompanied by the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Be not offended when he strives to probe the conscience, to awaken conviction, to show your need of Christ, to strip the soul of all false pleas of merit, to present you to the Comforter for His healing gifts, and to Christ for covering you with the robe of His righteousness\*.

\* See JEREMY TAYLOR’s *Holy Dying*, Hale’s ed., ch. v., sec. 1.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

THE interment of the dead has been always carefully attended to. Unassisted reason has dictated this to all nations, but religion has heightened this obligation ; and we find that the faithful in all ages have been solicitous for the decent burial of their departed friends. The funerals of the patriarchs, and the pious care of the survivors, are matter of special notice. Our Lord commended the funeral preparations of the devout women for himself as a good work ; and if heathens showed respect unto the dead, shall we think that less care is due to the bodies of Christians, who once were living temples of the Holy Ghost ? 1 Cor. vi. 19 ; to bodies which were consecrated to the service of God ; which bore their part in the duties of religion ; fought the good fight of faith and patience, self-denial and mortification, and underwent the fatigue of many hardships and afflictions for the sake of piety and virtue ? to bodies which we believe will one day be awakened again from their sleep of death ; have all their scattered particles of dust summoned together into their due order, and be “fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ,” (Phil. iii. 21. See also 1 Cor. xv. 42—44;) as being made partakers of the same glory with their immortal souls, as once they were of the same sufferings and good works ! Surely bodies so honoured here, and to be so glorified hereafter, and which too we own, even in the state of death, to be under the care of a divine providence and protection, are not to be exposed and despised by us as unworthy of our regard. These considerations had much weight with the primitive Christians.

The Romish doctrine of purgatory, which represents souls as undergoing a purifying correction, had so corrupted this office, that it consisted of little else but tedious repetitions of impertinent petitions for the dead. Our Reformers, therefore, remembering St. Augustine's rule, that all this office is designed, *not for the benefit of the dead, but the comfort and improvement of the living*, have justly rejected these superstitions, and designed this present form wholly for the instruction, admonition, and comfort of the attendants on this solemnity, and have brought back this matter to its original intention and use.

The persons to whom this office is denied are, 1st, Those who die unbaptized: not that the Church determines any thing concerning the future state of such; but since they have not been received within the pale of the Church, we cannot properly use an office at their funeral which all along supposes the person that is buried to have died in her communion. 2nd, Those who have been excommunicated; thus showing that they are cut off from the society of regular and devout Christians. 3rd, Those who voluntarily procure death to themselves. In this, however, are exempted those who have been shown by the verdict of a coroner's jury to have been idiots, lunatics, or otherwise of unsound mind.

At first, in compliance with the Roman and Jewish usages, the primitive Christians buried their dead outside the walls of their cities; and afterwards, when they had rest from persecutions, they built churches over the graves of any that had been martyrs, and called them by the names of those who slept beneath in Jesus. When the churches were built, however, they allowed no one to bury in them; but appropriated places around for this purpose, which were called cemeteries, or chambers of sleep, death

being frequently described in the New Testament under the figure of sleep. Separated from unhallowed purposes, they received the body as a *seed*, which in due time shall start to life a spiritual body, and meanwhile is defended and preserved in these gardens of the Lord.

The subject and design of THE SENTENCES WITH WHICH THE SERVICE BEGINS, is to teach us the three spiritual graces which we ought to exercise upon so solemn an occasion ; namely, faith, patience, and thanksgiving, and these placed in their proper order ; for by faith we gain patience, and when patience hath her perfect work, it will produce thanksgiving. The first of them is our Lord's comforting reply to Martha, when affection and sorrow for her brother had almost swallowed up her faith, and had made her *forget*, if not *doubt*, that Jesus was the eternal Son of God. The force of strong affection has too often the same effect upon many Christians under circumstances peculiarly trying ; but the patience and faith excited by this declaration, that Jesus has power absolutely in *himself* to raise the dead to life, whether in a moral or spiritual sense, induces us not to sorrow as those who have no hope.

The second sentence is from the book of Job. The old translation was different, and it better fitted this occasion. It ran thus, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise out of the earth in the last day, and shall be covered again with my skin, and shall see God in my flesh ; yea, I myself shall behold him, not with other, but these same eyes ;" and surely if Job, who lived among the Gentiles so long before the revelation of Christianity, could sustain his spirit with the hopes of a resurrection, it will be no small reproach to us, who have fuller and better assurances of it, to be slower in the belief of it

than he. It is an admirable consolation to all that mourn for the loss of friends to believe with holy Job, that the same person we are now laying in the earth, there to moulder into dust, shall in due time, by the power of God, arise from the grave and live again. We lose indeed the sight of them for a season ; but we know that Jesus our Redeemer liveth, who will in due time raise us all from the dust, when both our friend and we shall all behold him, and even know and distinguish each other again with these very eyes.

The third sentence reminds us that if we have lost a dear and useful friend, yet that we brought no friends with us into this world, nor can we carry them out from hence. They were given us by God, who can raise up others ; and they are taken away by Him to wean our affections from everything here. We should rather, therefore, bless the Giver for the time we have enjoyed them, than murmur at his taking them, after he has lent them so long. Again, our friend, it is true, is going naked to the grave, but no otherwise than he came ; for "as he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his own labour which he may carry away in his hand," Eccl. v. 15 ; see also Ps. xlix. 17. Whatever he possessed here was only useful to him so long as he stayed ; where is the misfortune then, if, upon removing from hence, he leaves that behind him which will be of no service to him in the place he is going to. Whilst he was engaged on this stage of the world, God furnished him with a habit suitable to the part which he expected him to perform ; shall we think it strange then that the actor is undressed when his part is done ? Let us consider ourselves under whatever character we please, there is still the same reason to join with the holy penmen in these reflections, " We brought nothing into

this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

In compliance with the ancient and universal custom of the Church, THE PSALMS PRESCRIBED in this office are highly suitable to the occasion. The former, the 39th, is the expression of David's grief at Absalom's death; and as it breathes submission to the stroke of affliction, because it is God's doing, is of use to check unseemly complaints, and turn them into devout prayers and meditations: the latter, the 90th, was composed by Moses on the fatal sentence going forth, that for their infidelity the vast multitude should die in the wilderness. The prophet not accusing the divine providence, but showing us how at a funeral, we should reflect upon our own lot, and apply the instances of mortality before us to the improving of our spiritual condition, by turning our thoughts to heavenly wisdom.

Next, the sublime LESSON FROM ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the Corinthians is read. Beginning with the assurance of Christ being risen from the dead, the apostle draws a parallel between the injury inflicted on the earth by the first Adam, and the glory provided for man by the second Adam. He takes a rapid survey of the general resurrection. He points to Christ as the first fruits, and declares the cheering truth, that before the final sentence of judgment, they that are Christ's shall be raised at his coming. Then cometh the end, when the kingdom of the Mediator (its great purpose having been answered) shall be delivered up into the hands of the Father, and God shall be all in all. The apostle next answers some objections against the resurrection of the body. What should induce Christians to press forward to martyrdom, and new converts to be baptized in the

place of the dead, if there were no security of a blessed life after this? If even in this world we see bodies variously constituted, on the earth, in the deep, in the air above, where is the difficulty to the Creator of raising the dead? Is it harder to restore than to create? Sown now like a seed in the earth, it must thence decay, till the new principle takes effect; and then, what was once corruption will be found incorruption, weakness will be found power, mortal shall put on immortality. He reveals that stupendous truth, that, at the great day, they who are alive shall not pass through death, but shall be suddenly changed. The trumpet shall be sounded by an Archangel, and the dead shall be raised, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. Well then may the Redeemed of the Lord take up the apostle's exclamation, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" and return thanks to the Lord Jesus, who hath taken away the sting from death, by making it a passage to glory; and destroyed the condemning sentence of the law, by His dying for our sin, and rising again for our justification.

When the body is brought from the Lord's house to the grave, and is about to be put into it, the Church is unwilling to lose a time so likely to make deep impression upon us,\* and therefore presents us with a

\* "When you can look collectedly on the quiet face of the departed, or see him intrusted, a most precious deposit, to the earth, then you may find—you will find—unsearchable riches of comfort in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. There is a sort of satisfying fullness in the teaching of the Church, as she leads you to the throne of grace with those spirit-stirring prayers of the Burial Service. You go home comforted in spite of yourself; then when with tearful eyes you gaze and gaze upon the lines of Holy Scripture that tell us of the body's honour, they seem to fall upon us with a force we never felt before; and of them, as from an endless fountain, bright hopes keep springing up, till our whole soul is overflowed with quiet thought. We have not seen the last of that beloved body: we have not lost for ever that

noble strain of devotion, being a meditation on the shortness, misery, and uncertainty of life, an acknowledgement of our dependence upon God, whom, though we have offended by our sins, yet we fly to Him for succour, and pray Him that no terror of temporal death may make us fall off from God, by a dangerous despair. Thus, it may be observed, our Church wholly rejects prayers for the dead, and strives to make the occasion as profitable as possible to the living.

We here say, that God has taken to himself the soul of our brother, by which we do not affirm that he is undoubtedly gone to heaven; for the wise man says of men in general, and consequently of the wicked, whose portion is not in heaven, that at their death, "the spirit returns to God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7; and if the spirits of all men go to God, then God certainly takes them to himself.

We likewise affirm that we commit his body to the ground, that is, we do not cast it away as a lost carcase, but carefully lay it in safe custody in the ground, as having in it a seed of immortality, and in "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life;" not that we believe that every one we bury shall rise again to joy and felicity, or profess this "sure and certain hope" of the person who is now interred. It is not *his* resurrection, but *the* resurrec-

earthly tabernacle that used to seem so beautiful to us, because we loved the heart that beat within it. No; it shall all come back again, even as it went. Changed it shall be, transfigured with a new and sunlike glory, still it shall be the same; and we shall know it to be the same, even as St. Peter did so strangely know Moses and Elias, when they talked with the Master in the Mount. Our vile bodies shall indeed be changed, and, oh blessed mystery! be fashioned like unto His glorious body; but still, amid it all, our friends shall say to us, and we to them, as He did before us, 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself!'-*The Burial Service, its Doctrine and Consolations.*-  
F. W. FABER.

tion that is here expressed ; nor do we go on to mention the change of *his* body in the singular number, but of “*our* vile body,” which comprehends the bodies of Christians in general. That this is the sense and meaning of the words, may be shown from the other parallel form which the Church has appointed to be used at THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD AT SEA ; and this being a principal article of our faith, it is highly reasonable that we should publicly acknowledge and declare our steadfastness in it, when we lay the body of any Christian in the grave.

THE PORTION OF SCRIPTURE WHICH SUCCEEDS is a consolatory sentence from Rev. xiv. 13, assuring us that the dead which die in the Lord are not to be lamented, but to be the subjects of our joy. “They rest from their labours,”—their work is done; their warfare is accomplished ; and now they enjoy crowns of victory, as a reward for their pains ; not indeed a merited reward, but a munificent gift. This also shows our reason for not praying for the dead to obtain that which they already enjoy.

THE LORD’S PRAYER is suitable at this solemnity, for in it we acknowledge that though we have lost a friend on earth, we have a greater—“Our Father which is in heaven.” At this dispensation we do not murmur, but “hallow his name,” and pray that “his kingdom may come,” in which the true disciples of Jesus, reunited in purer and perpetual bonds, shall “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,” and that whether God ordains life or death, “his will,” and not ours, “be done.” The rest of the prayer depicts our condition in this world : we require “daily bread” to sustain us,” mercy to “forgive us,” and grace to deliver us from evil, “both temporal and eternal.”

THE TWO NEXT PRAYERS have a different design from each other. The former appears to respect the whole

company, the latter the relatives and friends of the deceased. In the first of these we give thanks to God for delivering our friend from further calamity, and pray for the speedy advent of Christ's kingdom. It has been objected, that it is unnatural in this prayer to give thanks for the death of a friend, and so it would indeed be not to be affected by it; but whilst *as men we feel the loss, we must bear it as Christians\**; and when we consider that our departed friend is now freed from sin, and consider what he has gained, it would be an act of unkindness to him, and of ingratitude to God, not to be thankful.

The latter prayer is called "the Collect," being a collection of the choicest sentences of Scripture, to remove that undue grief which hurts us, and helps not the deceased; and to turn our thoughts to useful exercises of repentance, in order to our meeting again with more joy than now we part with sorrow.

Much objection has been made to the passage in this prayer, wherein we make declaration of hope that all we bury are saved. It should, however, be considered that there are different degrees of hope, the lowest of which is but one remove from despair. We are often said to hope that which we only wish or desire, but have not particular grounds to believe, only we are not sure of the contrary, or that the thing is impossible. For instance, suppose that in a storm we should speak of a friend at sea,—one man, considering the greatness of the tempest and the circumstances we imagine our friend to be in, says, I fear he is lost,—another replies, I hope not. What now is meant by this hope? No assurance can be had on either side; one hopes and another fears, and both consistently. The

\* . . . Feeble Nature drops, perhaps a tear,  
While Reason and Religion, better taught,  
Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb  
With wreath triumphant.—*YOUNG'S Night Thoughts.*

hope therefore denotes no more than a charitable wish or desire that it may be as we speak. Now this hope may be accompanied with the greatest fear ; there is therefore a twofold hope—the one of assurance, built upon grounds of belief, which rises or falls according to the appearance of the evidence ; the other of desire, built upon our affections, which rises or falls according to the degree of probability or charity. Now the hope in this place is of the latter sort, by which we may hope well of a person, unless we are absolutely sure that it is ill with him. And consequently we may hope that the deceased does “rest in Christ,” unless we are absolutely sure, which we can hardly be, that he is doomed to hell fire.

The Church supposes her children will take all her offices together ; and the person now buried is by the Church supposed to have repented his sins, and received the holy communion according to her directions: and surely she may well judge and hope the best concerning those who are thus prepared for the grave. However, let us suppose the men, who take exceptions at this passage, were left at liberty to omit it to any particular person which they were to bury ; doubtless they would be much at a loss to know which were the persons of whose resting in Christ they could have no hope at all, since none can set bounds to God’s mercy, till the final sentence that shall pass, upon any single person ; and if they did presume at any time to limit it, their blindfold censoriousness might be reproved justly with that saying of St. Paul, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant ?” Rom. xiv. 4 ; and they ought to tremble when they remember “ Judge not, that ye be not judged,” Matt. vii. 1. Our Lord severely checked the Jews for their presumptuous censure of some that they supposed to die in their sins, Luke xiii. 1, 2. We will easily grant

them that all professed Christians do not sleep in Christ ; but since we bury single persons, we cannot certainly know the state of particular men ; and where we are ignorant, it is safest to speak and hope the best.

If it be alleged that evil men will hereby be encouraged to continue in their sins, it may be answered, that the whole office confutes that vain conceit, for it promises happiness only to the pious ; and particularly the very clause preceding this doth plainly obviate this misconstruction, by moving every bystander to pray that he may be raised from the death of sin here, without which the Church declares that he cannot hope for a happy death or a joyful resurrection. And if it be well observed, we suppose the party deceased to have had his share in the work of grace before he obtained a portion in glory ; and accordingly we pray for the first, as to ourselves, before we presume to ask the latter.

As to our brother departed, we can only exercise our charity and our hope ; but for ourselves we have need to pray that we may, by holiness here, be fitted for happiness hereafter ; for in vain do we hope to be found acceptable at the last day, if we do not please God now. That blessing is only to be pronounced on those who love and fear him : God is a holy God, and heaven a holy place ; the saints and angels are all holy, nor can any dwell in that society who is not first made holy. If we could suppose an evil man should carry his evil inclinations of pride and envy, malice and revenge, lust and intemperance, to that glorious kingdom with him, heaven would be no heaven to such an one ; the place would be odious, the company troublesome, the employment ungrateful, and the eternity a burden intolerable ; he would give disturbance to holy souls, and they to him. He that is a good

man hath his heaven begun in the peace of his own conscience, and he is going thither where it will be completed.

Let us not then stand at the grave weeping. Let us go home silently, and study how by holiness we may come to that felicity to which they are gone before us. The Lord pardon and amend us all ! and then we shall courageously meet death ourselves, and patiently bear it in others, till they and we be awakened by the voice of Jesus, to receive us to his everlasting kingdom.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### THE THANKSGIVING OF WOMEN AFTER CHILD-BIRTH; COMMONLY CALLED THE CHURCHING OF WOMEN.—THE COMMINATION.

THIS custom is derived from the Jewish rite of purification, Lev. xii. ; for though the ceremonial precept is not now of force, the moral duty implied in it is still obligatory upon all. Although, therefore, the mother be no longer obliged to offer the material sacrifices of the law, yet she is bound to offer the evangelical sacrifice of praise, publicly acknowledging the blessing vouchsafed her, and professing her sense of the fresh obligations it lays her under to obedience ; and is the more evident from the conduct of the blessed Virgin, who humbly submitted to the Jewish rite, and offered her praise in the temple. When holy Scripture describes excessive sorrow in the most expressive manner, it likens it to that of a woman in travail ; and if this sorrow be so excessive, how great must be the joy to be delivered from that sorrow ! Commensurate,

certainly, must be the debt of thankfulness to the donor of that recovery, whence a necessity of "thanksgiving of women after childbirth." If it be asked why the Church hath appointed a particular form for this deliverance, and not for the deliverance from other cases of equal danger, the answer is, she did not so much take measure of the peril as accommodate herself to that mark of separation which God himself hath put between this and other maladies. "To conceive and bring forth in sorrow" was signally inflicted upon Eve, and in her, upon all mothers, as a penalty for her first disobedience, Gen. iii. 16: so that the sorrows of childbirth have, by God's express determination, a more direct and peculiar reference to Eve's disobedience than any disease whatsoever; and though all maladies are the product of the first sin, yet is the malediction specifically fixed and applied to this alone. Now, when that which was ordained primarily as a curse for the first sin is converted to so great a blessing, God is certainly in that case more to be praised in a set and solemn office.

It is required that whenever she does it "she shall come into the Church." And this is enjoined, 1st, For the honour of God, whose marvellous works in the formation of the child and preservation of the woman ought publicly to be owned, that so others may learn to put their trust in him. 2nd, That the whole congregation may have a fit opportunity for praising God for the too much forgotten mercy of their birth. And 3rd, That the woman may in the proper place own the mercy now vouchsafed her, of being restored to the happy privilege of worshipping God in the congregation of his saints.

How absurd is it then for any person to suppress their acknowledgments in private houses, and to give thanks for their recovery and release in no other place

than that of their confinement and restraint! a practice which is inconsistent with the very name of this office, "the churching of women," and which consequently implies a ridiculous solecism of being churched at home. Nor is it anything more consistent with the end and devotions prescribed by this office, than it is with the name of it. For with what propriety can the woman pretend to "pay her vows in the presence of all God's people, in the courts of the Lord's house," when she is only assuming state in a bed-chamber or parlour, and perhaps only accompanied by her nurse? This is not only an act of disobedience to the Church, but a high affront to Almighty God, whose mercy they scorn to acknowledge in a church, and think it honour enough done him if He is summoned by His priest to wait on them at their houses, and to take what thanks they will condescend to grant Him there. But surely a minister who considers the honour of the Lord he serves, will refuse such a servile compliance and betrayal of his Master's dignity. There can be no pretence of danger in the case, should the woman prove obstinate, upon the priest's refusal, (which ministers are apt to urge for their excuse when they are prevailed upon to give public baptism in private;) nor is the decision of a council wanting to instruct him, (if he has any doubts on account of the woman's ill health,) that he is not to perform this office at home, though she be really so weak as not to be able to come to church. For if she be not able to come to church, let her stay till she is: God does not require any thanks for a mercy before he has granted it; but if she comes as soon as her strength permits, she discharges her obligations both to Him and the Church.

This office consists of three parts; 1st, THE PREFACE, showing the reason and occasion of this duty; 2nd,

THE PRAISES contained in the two proper psalms ; 3rd, THE PRAYERS fitted to the present case, contained in the LESSER LITANY, LORD'S PRAYER, SUFFRAGES, AND COLLECT OF THANKSGIVING. It cannot be considered otherwise than as a most touching service, affectingly uniting domestic feelings with public worship. How deeply must the remembrance of our fallen state affect the mother as the late deliverance is recalled ! yea, when it is impressed upon her heart, before the altar, how the sorrows of death came upon her, and the pains of hell (meaning thereby not eternal sufferings, but simply severe and great pains) gat hold of her ; how she called upon her God in her trouble, and was heard. Now may her soul return again to its rest ; now should the resolution be formed, as though it had never been made before, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. But not in her *own* strength is the vow undertaken ; the humble hope sustains her, that help will be afforded from above, so that she may faithfully walk according to God's holy will in this life ; that she may be finally saved, having put her trust in the Lord, and that God will be a tower of strength from all her spiritual enemies.

This psalm is most suitable when we consider the pain and danger which the mother has undergone. There is another psalm which may be used when an heir is born, or a child bestowed on those who wished for one. Nor may it less aptly be used when those of humbler condition are churched ; for, by enlarging on the blessings of a numerous family, it obviates the murmurings of those discontented persons who may think themselves oppressed by such an increase.

The rubric directs "the woman that cometh to give her thanks to offer the accustomed offerings," by which is to be understood some offering to the officiating minister, not as a fee, but as a tribute or acknow-

ledgment due to God, who has declared himself honoured or robbed according as such offerings are paid or withheld. But besides the accustomed offering to the minister, the woman is to make a still better and greater offering, namely, an offering of herself to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God. The rubric directs, that "if there be a communion, it is convenient that she receive the holy communion," that being the most solemn way of praising God, as well for the present as for all other his mercies towards her, and the most likely means to bind herself more strictly to spend those days in his service which, by this late deliverance, he hath added to her life. And it need not be doubted but that the omission of it occasions the forgetfulness of this mercy, and the fall-off from piety which we too frequently observe.

A COMMINATION, OR DENOUNCING OF GOD'S ANGER  
AND JUDGMENT AGAINST SINNERS; *with certain  
Prayers to be used on the first day of Lent, and  
at other times, as the Ordinary shall appoint.*

The solemn public penitence alluded to in THE MINISTER'S OPENING ADDRESS is that which during the primitive ages occupied so conspicuous a place in the discipline of the Christian Church, whereby those who were guilty of grievous sins were solemnly reduced to the order of penitents; they came fasting, and clad in sackcloth and ashes on the occasion; and after the bishop had repeated the penitential psalms, and threw ashes upon them, they were dismissed from the Church, and not again received into full communion until after a course of long trial and exemplary conduct. Though this was severe, yet it was attended by many good consequences, so that it was anciently exercised in our own as well as in foreign churches. But during the corruption of the Church of Rome,

this godly discipline degenerated into a formal confession used by all the people, whether penitents or not, from whom no other testimony of their repentance was required than their submitting to have ashes sprinkled on their heads. But this our Reformers prudently laid aside, as a mere shadow and show; and not without hearty concern that the long continuance of the corruptions of the Romish Church, in their formal confessions and pretended absolutions, in their sale of indulgences and their sordid commutations of penance for money, had let the people loose from those primitive bands of discipline which tended really to their amendment, but to which, through the rigour and severity it enjoins, they found it impracticable to reduce them again. However, since they could not do what they desired, they desired to do as much as they could; and therefore, till the said discipline may be restored again\*, which is rather to be wished for than expected in these times—times so contemptuous of proper restraint—they have endeavoured to supply it as well as they are able by appointing this office, which is *a declaration of the wrath of God against all impenitent sinners, especially against those who are guilty of the sins herein enumerated, accompanied with a profession of belief that his laws are righteous, and the sentence by which they are sanctioned equitable and just.*

It was originally instituted by God, Deut. xi. and xxvii., religiously observed by Joshua, and was so transmitted to succeeding generations of the Jewish nation, as we are informed by their historian Josephus. As its tendency is to set forth the glory of God, by magnifying his essential attributes, and to set forward the conversion of all men, by impressing them with the

\* Bishop Wilson, in the diocese of Man, revived this discipline with much good effect.

proper character and terrible effects of sin, it is therefore suitable likewise to the devotions of the Christian Church. And, although, blessed be God ! it is true, as the Apostle says, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" yet it is true only with respect to those who sincerely and effectually repent. Upon those who continue in unrepented sin the curse still remains in force ; from those who have repented and brought forth fruits meet for repentance, it is removed for the sake of their Redeemer. It is fit, therefore, that all, whether penitent or impenitent, should avow their belief in the truth and equity of these curses ; the penitent, as an acknowledgment of the punishment which his sins in their own nature deserve ; as an act of gratitude to the Lord, for whose merits they are pardoned ; and withal, as a salutary admonition to him, that he again incur not the penalty, by becoming again the slave of sin : the impenitent, as a method of awakening him from his dangerous security, and bringing him to repentance and amendment before it be too late.

If there be any quality by which our Church is distinguished in her services, it is her true Christian charity, testified, as by other unequivocal marks, so likewise by the anxiety wherewith she endeavours to convince of their sin and danger, those persons who have "erred from the truth," to convert them from the error of their way," and thereby to "save their souls from death." And if there be any particular part of her services in which this Christian charity is most signally manifested, it is this most solemn, impressive, and affecting office ; but by the most strange perversion of her purpose, and misrepresentation of her character, founded upon palpable ignorance and inattention, in some cases upon prejudice and ill-will

towards her, she is on that very account accused of impiety and uncharitableness, as if she thereby taught her members to call down curses on themselves or their neighbours, and so be guilty of an extreme degree of wickedness and folly.

Now, in the first place, with respect to the *intent and motive* of the Church, nothing can be more unexceptionable, nothing more consistent with the soundest reason, nothing more agreeable with the spirit of the tenderest affection and the most pure piety. For what is her intent? It is that all her members, "being admonished of the great indignation of God against sinners, may the rather be moved to earnest and true repentance; and may walk more warily in these dangerous days; fleeing from such vices for which they affirm with their own mouths the curse of God to be due." In other words, that knowing and acknowledging the terror of the Lord, denounced by God Himself against impenitent sinners, they may be persuaded truly to repent of, and effectually to forsake, their former sins; to watch over their conduct with that caution, which becomes creatures, encompassed with such infirmities as are incident to human nature, and liable to still further corruption from the evil influence of those with whom they communicate; and so to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." More need not be said to show how entirely the intent of the Church is conceived in the spirit of that heavenly principle, which St. Paul describes as "rejoicing not in iniquity, but rejoicing in the truth;" and which St. James represents by one of its most appropriate actions, as engaged in "converting the sinner from

the error of his way," and in "saving his soul from death."

In the next place, that this service is not the expression of a wish or a prayer that we or others may be cursed, but a statement only of the "general sentences of God's cursing against impenitent sinners," on the part of the minister, and an affirmation, on the part of the people, that "the curse of God is due for those vices," will appear still more plainly, if we consider the *form of words* in which the minister and people are required to perform their respective parts of the solemnity.

THE *MINISTER'S WORDS* are these: "Cursed is the man that maketh any carved or molten image to worship it." "Cursed is he that curseth his father or mother," and so on to the last sentence. "Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators, and adulterers, covetous persons, idolators, slanderers, drunkards, and extortioners." The language is not "cursed *be he* or *be they*," but simply and indicatively, "cursed *is he* or *are they*" by whom such and such sins are committed. The sentiment is, as clearly as language can make it, not an imprecation—not an evil wish or prayer against the guilty persons—but a bare *declaration* that such persons are objects of God's avowed displeasure, and will suffer under the consequences of it, unless they repent.

THE PART OF THE *PEOPLE* is, that "to every sentence they answer and say, Amen;" that is, they express their *assent* to the declaration of the minister, or affirm their *belief* that what the minister has declared is true. Some persons, as hath been already intimated, suppose the word "Amen," in this place, to signify a wish or a prayer on the part of those who use it. Why? Most probably because it is the word which they are taught to use at the end of a prayer. And such is its meaning doubtless, when used in such

a place. But it is equally beyond a doubt that such is not its meaning in this place. The fact is, the word "Amen" originally and properly signifies no more than *verily* or *truly*, and it is a form of giving assent to the truth of that to which it is added. If that to which it is added be a prayer, then it is a joining in the prayer ; and it is as much as to say *so be it*, or, so I pray or wish it may be. If that to which it is added be a creed or profession of belief, then it is an avowal of assent to the creed or profession, and it is as much as to say, *so it is*, or, so I believe it to be \* ; all this I steadfastly believe. And thus in the case of any other declaration or affirmative proposition, such as we have already seen to be the character of these sentences ; the "Amen" is a *declaration* or *affirmation*, precisely of the same nature and to the same effect as that to which it is annexed ; just as if the people were to declare, in answer to the minister, "It is as you have said." You pronounce that all they are accursed who do "err and go astray from God's commandments ; you pronounce only what God himself hath pronounced ; and we cannot but believe and confess it to be true." Thus we may perceive that the "Amen," in this place, is not, and cannot be, a wish or a prayer that the curse may fall upon our own heads, or those of any other persons ; but that it is indeed an affirmation with our own mouths, that the curse of God is due to the sins enumerated, as the Church most distinctly and expressly states to be its signification.

Examples of the word Amen, where it is employed with a meaning evidently different from that of a wish or a prayer, will be found throughout the Gospels, and also in the Revelation of St. John, and in the book of Joshua : so that, in the whole, the word

\* See Morning Prayer, page 89.

Amen in this service is no more than an avowal of our conviction, that "he whom God blesseth is blessed, and he whom God curseth is cursed," Num. xxii. 26.

THE SINS here ENUMERATED are taken expressly from the word of God, and are of the most heinous character, and most plainly threatened with God's wrath and damnation, both in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Gospels. Surely they who are guilty of them are in a state of condemnation, whether the Church by her ministers declares it, and by her people confirms the declaration, or not. Her declaration of God's threatenings, and her profession of belief in the truth of them, is not, as we have seen, intended to bring, nor, in point of fact, is it capable of bringing, any evil upon any one. It cannot inflict a curse upon the penitent; it cannot make the impenitent in any way more accursed than they were before. It is, therefore, altogether, and in every point of view, acquitted of the charge of uncharitableness.

But, on the other hand, it may with reason advance its claim to be regarded as a most kind and charitable provision. Though it cannot bring a curse upon the guilty, much less upon the innocent, yet by holding up the curse plainly before the eyes of both, it may impress them with a lively sense of the danger of sin. It may be a wholesome caution therefore to the innocent, to walk more warily in [these dangerous days; to the guilty, it may be an alarming admonition of what they will finally suffer, if they persevere in guilt; and so may persuade them, by the terrors of the law, to flee from such vices, for which the curse of God is affirmed to be due. Thus, though it cannot bring a curse upon any one, there is no one to whom it may not eventually prove a blessing; and thus, considered in its proper light, not as an occasion or

aggravation of sufferings, but as a compassionate prediction of them, in order to their prevention, it resembles those "woes" which our blessed Lord pronounced in the Gospel, and is a convincing proof of the charity of the Church, showing that she, who is thus solicitous to "convert sinners from the error of their way, and to save their souls from death," is a worthy minister of the gospel of Him, who came into the world "to call sinners to repentance," and "to seek and to save that which was lost."

THE ADDRESS WHICH FOLLOWS is most impressive and affecting, and sets before the conscience the danger of straying from the ways of the Lord, and proclaims his overhanging judgments. And gracious are the words of encouragement which are added. If, in the former part, the terrific perils besetting a guilty soul are written against us on the wall, the latter portion assures us of the endless pity of our God and Saviour. The heart must be of flint that is not roused by the declarations of "the axe being ready to smite, the fan to scatter us before the wind; the snares, fire, brimstone, storm, and tempest ready to descend." The mind is appalled by the fearful vision of "falling into the hands of the living God;" of the sudden coming of the Judge, as a thief in the night; of the refusal of the Lord to hearken unto them that have hardened their hearts. Unto such obstinate rebels against the Majesty of Heaven, it is announced, that they may call, but the Lord will not answer; that they may knock, but the door of mercy will be closed against them; and the whole is summed up by the anticipated sound of that sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

But, after all this overwhelming manifestation of divine fury against wilful impenitence, how sweetly is heard the still small voice of mercy, entreating us not

to abuse the goodness of God, but to return to Him with a true and perfect heart. What a promise is *that* from God, "Though your sins were of scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though they be like purple, they shall become white as wool," Isa. i. 18. He that gave strength to put forth the withered arm, commands, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit," and graciously inquires, "Why will ye die, seeing that I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth?" In what words of comfort are we invited to Christ! How feelingly are we assured of His being our ready Advocate with the Father, of His being wounded for our transgressions, and smitten for our wickedness." If we will but return unto Him, who is the merciful receiver of all penitent sinners, and believe that he is most willing to pardon, if we come with faithful repentance; if from this day we submit ourselves to him, and walk in his ways, and take upon us his easy yoke, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy spirit, seeking his glory,—then, as surely as the word of God is true, Christ will deliver us from the curse of the law, and finally command us to take possession of his glorious kingdom.

That PSALM of deepest contrition, lowliest faith, and liveliest hope, THE 51ST, is then prayed by the congregation, meekly kneeling on their knees. And, after THE BLESSED REDEEMER'S OWN PRAYER, SUPPLICATION is offered that the Lord would spare all those who confess their sins, and absolve all whose consciences are accused by sin. And He, the most mighty God and merciful Father, who hath compassion upon all men, hating nothing that He hath made, and willing that the sinner should return from the error of his ways, is importuned to forgive, to receive, to comfort, to make haste and help the wearied in heart, that they may live with God, through Christ, for ever.

And never was the idea more clearly and devotionally conveyed than in the words of the prophet, that the Lord must turn us, else shall we never be turned. In the multitude of his mercies is the good Lord besought to spare us, to look upon us, and bring us from confusion. Lastly, there sounds forth from the mercy seat that gracious BENEDICTION,—“ The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord lift up his countenance on thee, and give thee peace, now and for evermore.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE ORDINATION SERVICES.

In the preface it is broadly stated, as a received opinion, that from the apostles' time there have been these three orders of ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and whatever may have been the names by which they have been designated, it appears that from the first establishment of a visible Church on earth by God, it has always seemed good to him to appoint three orders or gradations of ministers, besides the laity, or general body of the congregation. Thus in the Jewish Church there were, 1st, Chief Priests; 2nd, Priests; 3rd, Levites. In the days of Christ's own ministration there were, 1st, Christ; 2nd, Apostles; 3rd, the Seventy-two Disciples, Luke x. 1. In the times of the apostles, after Christ's death, upon the establishment of the Christian Church, there were, 1st, Apostles; 2nd, Bishops, Elders, or Presbyters; 3rd, Deacons. After the death of most of the apostles, but during the lifetime of St. John, (as we find in the Revelation,) the title of angels seems to

be applied to the first order of ministers. But upon the death of the apostles, probably from humility, the then existing chief rulers, not presuming to take to themselves the title which had once been borne by the apostles of Christ, or because the churches had now assumed a more settled and fixed character, we find them designated as, 1st, Bishops ; 2nd, Presbyters, or Elders ; 3rd, Deacons ; which are the designations of the three orders now constituting the ministry of the Church. It may be right to remark that the word priest is an abbreviation of the word presbyter, which is taken from the Greek *presbuteros*, the literal English of which is *elder*, so that the several terms, priest, presbyter, and elder, are all of the same signification. We must remember also, that at the first preaching of the Gospel, the Church was entirely missionary, and had but little settled character, therefore Apostles and Angels, both which terms are derived from Greek words signifying messengers, were suitable titles for those to whom they were applied ; who had the care, like St. Paul, of many churches, scattered here and there at intervals over wide districts, and who were continually labouring to plant new churches everywhere around them amid the heathen world. But when believers increased, and congregations became more settled, and consequently a more regular and permanent superintendence became necessary, the title *episcopos*, (in the Greek signifying overseer,) and bishop, (which in the English is derived from the notion of a shepherd's superintendence of his flock,) became more appropriate. The actual name, however, is of less importance ; but the existence of three distinct orders, with separate duties and authority, has always been maintained in the Catholic Church.

It has been argued that since no systematic form of rule for the constitution of the Church is laid down

in the New Testament, that therefore every community of worshippers may make what rules they please. But the New Testament does not profess to furnish us with a regular code of laws or catalogue of officers, for this reason, amongst many, that the machinery of a Christian Church was, to some extent, in operation before any part of the volume was composed. The Epistles of St. Paul, where we might at first, perhaps, have expected something of the kind, were all (except those addressed to individuals) written to churches *already* established,—established either by himself or some fellow-labourers who had been *personally* on the spot to construct the spiritual building ;—and, in the epistles to these communities, their acquaintance with the rules and regulations of the necessary order and discipline to be observed, is taken for granted ; and we only find allusions to such matters connected therewith, as either by way of exhortation, admonition, or reproof, the apostle thought it necessary to dwell upon. The epistles to Timothy and Titus approach the nearest to anything of the kind, being admonitory and hortatory addresses to them upon their appointment as bishops and chief rulers of the churches of Ephesus and Crete. But even here it is so assumed by the apostle, that they who had often assisted him in similar works, fully knew his mind, and were acquainted with the general rules by which they were to administer their office, and set about the establishment of churches, that it is only by incidental notices and observations that we have any *written* information on these points. Still these incidental notices and observations, together with others in other portions of the sacred writings, are of valuable importance. And certainly it is not easy to account for the singular uniformity that prevailed in the arrangements made for the establishment of the early

churches, if all such churches were independent—were entirely independent communities, or if such uniformity were a matter of total indifference, and depended solely upon the will and choice of the congregations; and if these arrangements adopted by the apostles were merely provisional, to suit existing emergencies, it is natural to expect that the different emergencies in different places would have required different arrangements to meet them; and thus that, either to suit the case, or the will of the congregations, different modes of *conferring ministerial authority* would have been provided for the Jew and the Gentile, for the uncivilized Philippians and the luxurious citizens of Corinth. But on the contrary, all are to be made brethren of one great family, children of one Father, who rules his household, “the Church,” with one uniform discipline—the spirit broods over the chaos of conflicting passions, prejudices, and habits—and behold, a new creation, in which is to be found neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free;” and St. Paul, speaking language that bears testimony to catholic and uniform discipline, says on one occasion, “If any seem to be *contentious* (setting up any of their own private notions, and that even in matters of comparative insignificance,) we have no such custom, nor the *Churches of God*,” 1 Cor. xi. 6.

The contemporary friends of the apostles must have known their sentiments more accurately than inquirers in after ages, and their testimony is full, clear, and decisive upon the appointment of a three-fold ministry in the Church of Christ, who had authority to transmit their commission to a succession of ministers after them\*. To quote the passages at full

\* It may here be useful to remark, that we have precisely the *same species* of evidence to prove that the works attributed to the

length would be tedious; I shall therefore only refer to Clemens, bishop of Rome (mentioned by St. Paul, Phil. iv. 33,) Ignatius, the friend of St. Peter, and disciple of St. John, and bishop of Antioch; Irenæus, disciple of Polycarp, first a presbyter, and afterwards bishop of Lyons. Great stress may be laid upon their authority, because they were contemporary with, and immediate successors of the apostles; and such holy men, martyrs for the Gospel's sake, would not have so earnestly insisted upon the importance of a three-fold ministry, the authority of the bishops, and their succession in the ministry from the apostles, if these were idle and indifferent matters; and if to their testimony be added the concurrent uniform practice of fifteen centuries, the conclusion must follow, in the words of an ancient author, that we must take care above all things to adhere to "that which has been believed in all places, at all times, and by all persons;" for this is truly and properly catholic, and consequently that "it never was, nor is, nor ever shall be, lawful to teach Christian people any other thing than that which has been received from a primitive fountain."

These points were almost unquestioned and undisputed for 1500 years after the first preaching of the Gospel, but at the time of the Reformation, about 300 years ago, some of the Reformed Churches omitted episcopacy, that is the office of bishops, as the superintending authority in the Church, pleading *necessity alone as their justification for so doing*, because none of the bishops in the countries connected with them renounced popery; and it is worthy of remark that

early Fathers were written at the time they profess to be, and by the individuals whose names they bear, that we have respecting the different portions of Scripture which are attributed to the Evangelists and Apostles.

CALVIN, the leader of this section of the reformers, declared those to be worthy of every anathema, who would not reverence and submit to episcopacy, when it was to be met with in its legitimate form. And BEZA, another of the same class, expressed his deliberate opinion, that England had retained her episcopal ministry by the peculiar blessing of God, and his wish that she might long enjoy it. BUCER, also one of the leading Reformers, (himself a non-episcopalian like Calvin and Beza,) says, “By the perpetual observance of *all* the churches, even *from the apostles' time*, we see that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, that among presbyters, to whom the procuration of the Church was chiefly committed, there should be one that should have the charge of divers churches, and the whole ministry committed to him ; and by reason of that charge he was above the rest, and therefore the name of bishop was peculiarly attributed to those chief rulers\*.”

These churches did not afterwards obtain episcopal authority, for unfortunately wherever episcopacy was rejected, there was there less moderation observed in carrying on the work of reformation generally, so that it assumed the character of reconstruction instead of reformation. The violence of popular feeling seems then to have been let loose against the Church of Rome, without any sufficient power to guide, or check to restrain it †, so that together with the errors of

\* “ We require you to find out but one Church upon the face of the whole earth, that hath been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by episcopal regimen sithence the time that the blessed apostles were here conversant.”—HOOKER, *Preface to Ecc. Pol.*

† “ The Reformation gave such a turn to weak heads, that had not weight enough to poise themselves between the extremes of popery and fanaticism, that everything older than yesterday was looked upon to be popish and antichristian. The meanest of the people aspired to the priesthood, and were readier to frame new

popery, much of what was true was rejected also, which caused so wide a breach between the Reformed Churches, that a union soon became hopeless. In England, the great body of the clergy, with a majority of the laity also, renounced popery together, the sovereign and the bishops taking the lead ; so that in this case popular clamour and indiscriminate zeal were not brought to bear upon the old religion. The great work was carried on under the sanction of authority, and under the guidance of able, learned, and pious men, then occupying the episcopal bench, who were qualified to examine carefully the different points, distinguishing between truth and falsehood, who, while they rejected the latter, preserved the former unhurt, and who themselves afterwards, as martyrs at the stake, gave good testimony to the sincerity with which they acted. The consequence was, that while other communions, in fact, founded a new Church, and established, of their own authority, a fresh ministry, the English reformers thought it enough to reform the abuses which had crept into the Church of Christ, as already founded on earth, and were content to receive that ministry, which Christ himself had once appointed.

Reason plainly requires subordination among the clergy ; experience likewise attesteth it, and the chief inpugners of episcopacy confess it by their practice, who for prevention of disorders have been fain of their own heads to devise ecclesiastical subordination of classes, provinces, and nations, and to appoint moderators, or temporary bishops in their assemblies, so that reason hath forced the dissenters from the Church to imitate it. We have an instance recorded of God's displeasure on an attempt at overthrowing this system

laws for the Church, than to obey the old."—SHERLOCK, as quoted by Daubeny.

of ministerial subordination in the doom which fell upon Korah and his apostates in rebellion. Their effort was not to secure an equality in things political, but in things ecclesiastical: he strove not to ascend to a higher office in the state, or to drag down civil authorities to his own level; his ambition was to destroy the distinction which subsisted between priests and Levites, and to create a perfect equality among ministers. On the fearful sepulchre which was opened was inscribed the mind of God, that subordination in things spiritual was the system he would have followed by his people; and the apostle Jude (ver. 11) by denouncing woes on those "presumptuous" Christians, who "perished in the gainsaying of Core," shows that a sin essentially like that of Korah did then and may exist in the Christian Church, and is calculated to call down from heaven some form of Korah's punishment.

An inward call to the ministry, or personal holiness in the individual, is not sufficient alone to authorize his assuming the office. If, indeed, by an inward call be meant a pious disposition, earnestly bent on setting forth God's glory, and setting forward the salvation of his people, first by undergoing the requisite previous preparation, and then by submitting to the regular mode of appointment; such an inward call is an important preliminary to the reception of the ministerial commission, and accordingly, in our service, the candidate is asked, "If he *trusts* he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting his glory, and the edifying of his people?" But such call is not a sufficient qualification; for if an individual were allowed to be guided by his own feelings or judgment alone in assuming the ministerial office, self-delusion would, in numberless cases, be the

result. And our Lord himself, who had every qualification derivable from spiritual testimony, as well as from personal holiness, as if for the very purpose of setting his disciples an example of caution and forbearance, before he entered upon his ministry, waited for an outward designation to it.

The Church requires of a candidate for ordination that he be of fit age ; namely, twenty-three for the order of deacon, twenty-four for that of priest, and thirty for that of bishop ; and must be known to the bishop, either personally, or by sufficient testimony, to be of virtuous conversation, and without crime, and on examination and trial be found learned in the Latin tongue, and sufficiently instructed in holy Scripture. The testimony required is the subscription of three or four grave ministers, together with that of other credible persons who have known his life and behaviour for the space of three years next before." (Canon 33.) Human respects and solicitations of acquaintance, and other mere social regards, are great temptations with people of kind disposition, to easy compliance in signing these, when their judgment does not coincide with their good nature. Upon this head a most reverend prelate charged his clergy, "not to impose upon him by signing testimonials which they did not know to be true, as they would answer it to him at the dreadful day of judgment," which being duly considered, will, it is to be hoped, prevent them from ever being the occasion of dishonour to God, and mischief to souls, by giving their signatures, out of custom or compliment, to mere strangers, or to oblige a friend that they know does not deserve it.

The candidate must be skilled in the Latin tongue, since the most considerable works of the first Christian authors are written in that language. It is St. Paul's injunction that a minister "be apt" or, as the

word imports, “able” “to teach,” nor can any man be fit to teach others who hath not himself been well instructed, first, in secular learning, and secondly, in holy Scripture. The apostles, wanting time and opportunity to get learning in the ordinary way, were miraculously inspired both with the knowledge of all tongues and of all divine truths, to show that Christ himself judged these were necessary qualifications for his ministers. But as the manna ceased when God’s people came to a land where corn would grow by industry, so heaven hath now withdrawn this immediate inspiration, and left us to acquire knowledge by study and other proper means.

The Ordination Services of our Church are exactly conformable to the directions given in Holy Scripture, and more agreeable to the practice of the primitive Church than any offices of this kind in the world: being neither so naked as the mode of Geneva, nor so luxuriant in ceremony as that of the Romish Church, for we have added to the general rules of Scripture all and only the primitive rites, agreeing with the reformed in that which we have taken from Scripture, and with the Roman forms in all that accords with genuine antiquity. Upon the whole, they are so instructing, so pious, and so very proper to the occasion, that it is earnestly to be recommended to all that are to enter into holy orders, 1st, to read that form over which belongs to the order he is about to receive, that he may prepare himself for it, by understanding his duty and considering his vows before he makes them. 2nd, Because we must perform our vows, and practise our duty all our lives long; it is requisite for every clergyman, once a year at least, to read the same office over, to keep him mindful of his engagements.

The Greek word whence our English word “Deacon” is derived, occurs sometimes in Scripture in a larger

signification than barely to denote that particular ecclesiastical order for which it is now generally used; for instance, in Rom. xv. 8; iii. 5; Acts xx. 24; Rom. xi. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 5. But the name is more especially used to denote the order of deacons—those assistants appointed by the apostles (Acts vi.) to collect and dispose the alms of the poor, according to their several exigences, and whom we afterwards find performing ministerial offices, especially St. Stephen preaching, St. Philip baptizing, which they were empowered to do by the authority given them by the apostles. In the earliest monuments of antiquity, we find that deacons constantly attended the bishop in all his sacred ministrations, and assisted him, but their chief duty was to distribute the bread and wine to the people, after the bishop had consecrated it; they also bore a part in the liturgy, with the priest or the bishop, and, when churches were built in the country, deacons alone sometimes performed the whole office there, and not only read the prayers but the Gospel, and by license preached a homily upon it.

When there is an ordination, THE SERMON is fixed after the end of MORNING PRAYER, strictly so called, and THE LITANY removed into the COMMUNION SERVICE, as the ordination is performed at the altar, being joined with a communion. The sermon relates to the occasion, designing, 1st, To instruct the candidates in the several parts of their duty and the nature of their office, that they may consider well the great charge they are about to undertake, and be encouraged cheerfully to promise, and sincerely to resolve, that they will perform it by God's help. 2nd, To teach the congregation what reverend esteem they ought to have of such as are set to watch for their souls, to offer up their prayers to God, and to make known to them God's word and will. The usefulness of such a sermon at

this time is sufficient to justify our own and other reformed churches in requiring it, if there were no precedent for it in antiquity.

The Archdeacon is here mentioned in the rubric as presenting the candidates to the bishop. In great churches, when there were many deacons, the eldest had the title of archdeacon, and was a sort of governor over all the rest; afterwards they were chosen not for age alone, but for other good qualities. Among their various duties, one was to examine and approve candidates for holy orders; indeed, the bishops employed them in so many affairs, that they were called "the eyes of the bishop," but still they were only of the order of deacons. In time, though they kept the title of archdeacons, they were often presbyters, and their powers were then much enlarged, for they were employed by the bishops to visit their dioceses for them.

The people are not called upon to take any part in the ordination of ministers; that sacred duty, from the days of the apostles, and by the original constitution of the Church of Christ in a succession of ages, having been intrusted to other hands. Popular election of ministers was never the practice of the primitive times, nor has it ever been admitted into the constitution of any church established on the primitive model. But a due deference is paid to their testimony in setting apart proper persons for their ministry. So strict indeed is the scrutiny, that in the parish church of the place where the candidate resides, notice of his intention is required to be given publicly, during the time of divine service; and every man who knows any specific offence or impediment lying against him, is intreated in the name of God to declare them. **THIS APPEAL IS AGAIN MADE** at the time of ordination, and, consequently, if any of the people are aware of any impediment or notable crime in any

of the persons to be ordained, it is their fault if he be ordained, for they may hinder it if they choose, by declaring the objections, which if they neglect to do, they ought to bear all the blame now, and must answer for it another day.

If it should so happen that the bishop, for some alleged cause, should surcease from ordaining any of the candidates, let it be observed that he still acts under the influence of Christian forbearance. Though, in such a case, it would be improper to proceed to the ordination of a person charged with offence, it is charitably supposed that he may be innocent of the accusation, and therefore the ceremony is suspended “until such time as the party accused be found clear of the crime.” If there be no objection, the bishop commends those who are found fit to the prayers of the people; and if any priests are ordained, that being the more important office, a space is allowed for the congregation’s private devotions; for some of them may be friends or relatives to the candidates, or be such as are to be put under their charge; but even they who have no such special ties, are obliged, as Christians and members of that Church wherein these men are to officiate, to pray heartily that its clergy may be rightly chosen and replenished with grace, since that is a common blessing to all Christians. The usual prayers of the morning service are then offered up, with an **ESPECIAL INTERCESSION IN THE LITANY**, that the Lord would be pleased to pour His grace upon the candidate, so that he may be enabled duly to execute his office, to the edifying of the Church and the glorifying of God’s name.

In THE COLLECT for the occasion, having premised, 1st, that the variety of orders amongst ministers in His Church, and 2nd, that this order of deacons were instituted by Almighty God, we further intreat

to replenish this 'His servant with the truth of His doctrine, and to adorn him with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, he may glorify God's name and edify His Church. These two cannot be separated ; for if a minister be innocent, but ignorant, his innocence only profits himself, but he is not qualified to instruct others ; and, if he be learned, but vicious, his evil example hinders the effects of his exhortations, and makes his knowledge become unprofitable. Wherefore a good clergyman must have both ; and we pray for both together, that his head may be full stored with the knowledge of all orthodox principles, and his life adorned with all sorts of virtuous practices.

THE EPISTLE sets forth the seriousness, sincerity, temperance, and unambitious mind which should shine forth in the Deacons ; while the corresponding duties of their wives, in the exercise of charity, simplicity and faithfulness, are described ; the Gospel (usually read by a deacon) proclaims the constant watchfulness and devotedness to his heavenly Master's service which should adorn the mind of one professedly relinquishing the world, that he may turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Previously to the reading of the Gospel, (his first act of celebration of the Divine service,) the Deacon is required to take THE OATHS OF ALLEGIANCE AND SUPREMACY, excluding all foreign interference in matters of religion. The position in the former part of the oath has indeed been denied by many eminent Romanists ; but if the acknowledged doctrine of that Church be unalterable, as we are assured that it is by their highest authority, the clause must continue as a security of the rights of the Church of England, and this Protestant country, and fully sufficient to justify

and confirm the second part of the oath for the exclusion of every foreign power in the jurisdiction of this realm. While the "sentence declaratory of Pope Pius the Fifth against Queen Elizabeth and the heretics adhering to her" remains unrepealed or disavowed, this oath of supremacy will be considered as indispensably necessary.

The candidate next most solemnly declares *his trust* that he is moved by the Spirit of God, that *is, has a well-grounded persuasion of his intention* to take upon him this office, in order to the promotion of God's glory, and avows his belief of being truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to this ministry. His faith in the canonical Scriptures is openly testified, and a promise is exacted, that he will, the Lord being his helper, diligently read the Scriptures unto the people assembled in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve\*; this latter injunction being intended to exclude those ordained to no charge, or those, who under pretence of preaching the Gospel, preached themselves. The bishop then proceeds to set before him the nature of the duties which he is bound to discharge, as a deacon; namely, assistance to the priest, as in other parts of the service, so especially in administering the holy communion, reading Scripture and homilies in the church, giving instruction to youth in the catechism, baptizing infants in the priest's absence, and preaching, if he receive a license from his Ordinary. An active spirit of charity among the poor and infirm, and all deference to the responsible minister of the cure, being further insisted on, as

\* Should this meet the observation of any of my clerical brethren, I would respectfully recommend their perusal of *The Christian Ministry; its Institution, Succession, and Ordination*; by the Rev. J. C. CROSTHWTAITE, A.M.; and also of the valuable Notes in the Appendix.

habits to be cultivated with a glad and willing heart, his vow is made in the strength of the Lord God.

But as, without personal holiness, the most imposing array of public acts are little worth, the candidate now binds himself to frame and fashion his own life and those of his household according to the standard of the Gospel, so that they be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ. And having finally pledged himself to render due obedience to his ordinary, and other ministers bearing jurisdiction over him, he receives, on his bended knees the sacred title to the diaconship in these memorable words, the bishop laying his hands on his head: "Take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon in the Church of God, committed under thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and to preach the same, if thou be licensed thereto by the bishop."

With these words, which, to the last moment of life, must thrill in the ears of him that has knelt before God at such a moment, and received such a commission, there is delivered into his hands by the bishop, the volume of the New Testament; and the body and blood of Christ being devoutly received, in token of fidelity from man, and enabling grace from God, the incense of prayer ascends, that the servant of the Lord, who is now offering himself, may be constant in his ministrations, humble and modest, and having a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; that so he may "purchase to himself a good degree," (1. Tim. iii. 13,) and be found worthy of being called into the higher ministries of Christ.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

## ORDINATION SERVICES—CONTINUED.

## THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.—THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS.

It has already been observed that the word Priest is a contraction of presbyter, and that in its proper signification it denotes an elder. Ministers of Christ's religion never are called in the New Testament by the name which alone designates *a sacrificer*; the word in the Greek signifying such, never once being applied to them by any of the inspired penmen, or any of the most ancient Christian writers, which it undoubtedly would have been, had they succeeded to the Jewish priesthood in the office of offering sacrifice.

This order has always had the honour to be styled “brethren to the bishops.” This way of expression was begun by St. Peter, whom the bishops in all times have copied after: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder,” 1 Pet. v. 1. They were also counsellors to the bishops upon the most important affairs, in which they were engaged. The bishops consulted them about the qualifications of persons who were to be ordained. Their advice was likewise taken in animadverting upon the faults of the clergy, in suspending or deposing them; and they generally gave their votes in councils.

THE EPISTLE in this office describes the rich diversity of gifts which adorned the Church in its early state, and is followed by an extract from one of THE GOSPELS, either describing the magnitude of the harvest, and the fewness of the labourers, or the duties of a Christian shepherd, in imitation of Christ the great Pastor of the fold.

To prevent any misconception or misapplication of the word "hireling" in this Gospel, it is necessary to remark, that it does not mean one who performs the office or duty of a minister for hire or reward; for the apostle, or rather our blessed Lord himself, says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire," or "reward," 1 Tim. v. 18; Luke x. 7. In an established country, and indeed in any country, where the teacher must be supported by the taught, whether the emolument be of a public or private nature, the man who is duly appointed, and performs his duty to his flock, is a true pastor and no hireling. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. But he is an hireling, in the debased sense of the expression, who endeavours to make a gain of godliness, a mercenary, who teaches for doctrines the commandments of men; one who will flee when the wolf cometh, who will not stand in the gap, who neither possesses faith to fulfil the duties of his office, nor a desire to protect his sheep. Teachers of false doctrines, self-appointed and self-approved preachers, fanatical declaimers, those who intrude themselves into the chair of instruction under hypocritical or false pretences; all these unquestionably are hirelings. (See 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.) Another order of hirelings are those who are ignorant of their profession, whether in learning or in faith, and are totally unqualified to perform its duties; "desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm," 1 Tim. i. 7; "intruding themselves into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind." Col. ii. 18. Nor shall we less call those hirelings whose moral conduct is as defective as their religious belief.

AN ADDRESS is next delivered by the bishop ~~to the~~

CANDIDATES, of a most instructive, arousing, and consolatory character. They are reminded in this of the dignity and importance of the office, unto which they are called as messengers, watchmen, stewards of the Lord. It is deeply impressed on them, how they must teach, premonish, feed, provide for the Lord's family; what a charge lies upon them, "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children in this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." They are intreated to have always printed in their remembrance how great a treasure is committed to their charge—sheep purchased at no less a cost than their shepherd's life; and what an honour, in attendance on the spouse, the body of Christ, is granted them! How terrific is the admonition following, (yea, after many years have rolled away,) that if the Church, or any member, shall take hurt by their negligence, the fault is great, the punishment which will ensue, horrible. They must never cease their care, labour and diligence, until all intrusted to their charge are brought to "such ripeness of faith, and perfectness of knowledge, as that no room shall be left for error in religion, or viciousness in life."

Having thus fully exhibited the nature, the dignity, and the responsibility of the ministerial office, the remainder of this heart-searching exhortation consists of advice in girding themselves for their high duty. Most solemnly are they reminded, that a will and ability answerable to such a call, can come from God alone, and must earnestly be prayed for; that such a work as the salvation of man can in nowise be accomplished, but through the remedy of the divine word. Hence the infinite obligation to read and learn the Scriptures, and to frame their manners, and those of all pertaining to them, according to the revealed

standard. Hence ought they to set aside, as much as possible, all worldly cares and studies, and apply themselves wholly to this one thing. Thus, by constant weighing of the Holy Scriptures, and continual prayer to God, through the mediation of the only Saviour, they are encouraged to hope that they shall wax riper in the ministry, and become wholesome and godly examples for the people to follow. As was the candidate for the office of deacon, so he that seeketh the priesthood is required publicly to declare his motives, his faith, his resolutions of obedience, before obtaining admission. He avows his conviction that he has been called according to the Lord's will. He professes belief in the fullness and certainty of Holy Scripture, resolving, by the grace of God, to teach nothing, as necessary for salvation, but what may be concluded and proved thereby. His vow is uttered, that he will minister the doctrine, the sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, according to the commands of the Lord, interpreted by the Church. *The Lord being his helper*, he binds himself to drive away all erroneous doctrine; and both unto the sick and unto the whole, within his cure, to use public and private monition and exhortation, as occasion shall be given. In prayer and meditation, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh, he promises, in the divine strength, to be diligent to exhibit a safe example to his flock, to promote order, quietness, and peace, and to submit to the godly judgment of those invested with ecclesiastical authority over him. **THEN DOES THE BISHOP PRAY** the Almighty to grant him strength and power to fulfil these high duties, and accomplish the work begun in him:—and silence being kept, that the congregation may secretly commend the candidates to the grace of God, the descent of the Spirit, in His sanctifying gifts, is desired in words simple and vener-

able from their antiquity; after which, RENEWED PRAYER being MADE for Christ's kingdom to be enlarged and glorified, by the labours of those now set apart, the commission is granted to each, meekly kneeling on his knees, in these words:—"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church, now committed unto thee, by imposition of hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These words being spoken, the presbyters laying on their hands, together with the bishop, the Bible is placed in the hand of the newly ordained priest, with this parting charge, "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments in the congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereto."

The Holy Spirit being that person of the blessed Trinity to which the distributing of the several offices in the Church, and qualifying the persons for them, is generally ascribed in Scripture, Acts, xiii. 2, 4; xx. 28; 1 Cor. xii. 11, a particular address is therefore made to Him, which we do before the ordination, in THE HYMNS above alluded to. Though the words of them have lost something from time, the prayer is too serious and important ever to be forgotten. We are not so enthusiastic as to expect an extraordinary communication of the spirit to every minister of the Gospel; neither are we so void of spiritual feeling as to imagine that the divine influence which God himself has promised, and an innumerable host of Christians have displayed by their conduct, cannot touch our hearts. We do truly believe that it is the grace of God operating with our spirit which enables us to

fulfil our duty in so arduous a situation. We may "resist and quench the spirit," Acts, vii. 51; 1 Thess. v. 19; and we may "grow in grace," 2 Pet. iii. 18. From these expressions we are taught, to leave our hearts open in the one case, and in the other to aim at greater perfection. In both, our connexion with the Spirit is made manifest; for "if we have not the Spirit of Christ we are none of his," Rom. viii. 9. May the Spirit of divine grace "visit our minds," and "inspire our souls," with holy affections, that we may improve those "manifold gifts" which alone give stability to the Church of Christ, and are derived from him, "the fountain and the spring of all celestial joy."

Though the orders of ministers in the Church are designated by particular names of primitive application, the functions and obligations of the sacred offices expand into a thousand ramifications. It is probably for this reason that, instead of using the terms priest and deacon, the bishop in his prayer refers to St. Paul's classification in Eph. iv. 11, "apostles and prophets, evangelists, doctors, and pastors." Not that these constituted different orders in the ministry, but they displayed the several departments of instruction, which every one, jointly or severally, was called upon to sustain. One or other, or all of these characters, are still necessary in the Church, and the gift is distributed as every man has need.

Objections have been raised against the expression "Receive the Holy Ghost," it being considered too much for any mortal man to pretend to give the Holy Ghost, as the word "receive" seems to imply; but by the Holy Ghost we understand not the person of the Holy Ghost, but only His gifts and graces, which are conferred in ordination; for the Holy Ghost is frequently used in Scripture for His gifts; so that our

Church means no more by the expression here, than St. Paul did by "the gift or grace of God," which he exhorts Timothy to recruit or "stir up," if any decays had been made in it since the imposition of hands upon him, 2 Tim. i. 6. This form was pitched upon by the Church, as seeming a very proper one, from its being used by our blessed Saviour himself, when he vested the apostles with the priestly power of absolution, John xx. 23. Indeed, if the bishop who pronounces these words, pretended to an original power inherent in himself by virtue of his office to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it were matter of exception; but when he claims only herein a ministerial power, which God hath authorized him to exercise, there is no reason to find fault. For in the word immediately before this form, as it stands in St. John's Gospel, it is expressly said, "As my Father sent me, even so send I you;" vesting them thereby with as ample powers of preaching the Gospel themselves, and commissioning new preachers, as he himself had been intrusted with by God the Father.

"Whose sins thou dost forgive, &c.," are the words of Christ to his apostles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the sins of penitent persons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor does the bishop pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers which the apostles had in this respect. They had the "discernment of spirits," 1 Cor. xii. 10, and could say with certainty when persons were penitent, and consequently forgiven, and when not, Acts viii. 21, 23. They were able also to inflict miraculous punishment on offenders, and to remove, on their repentance, the punishments which had been inflicted. These words will convey nothing of all this to the persons now ordained; but still, when the bishop uses them, they

give them, 1st, An assurance that, according to the terms of that Gospel which they are to preach, men shall be pardoned or condemned; 2nd, A right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off, which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being bestowed for the edification of the Church, must be restrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumstances. And our Church wishes, with much reason, for circumstances more favourable to the exertion of it.—*Commination Service.*

#### THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS.

The peculiar office of a Bishop consists in four particulars;—In ordaining presbyters or deacons, 1 Tim. v. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 1—13; Titus, i. 5. In superintending the doctrine taught by these ministers, 1 Tim. i. 3. In superintending their conduct, 1 Tim. v. 1—9. In regulating such matters in the Church as are not settled by express divine authority, 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15; 1 Cor. xi. 34; Titus, i. 5; Acts, xx. 17.

In the infancy of Christianity the bishops were elected by the clergy and people; but, as in all popular elections, favouritism, prejudice, and tumult, are found to prevail, on the emperors becoming Christian, they were generally consulted; and after choice being made, three or four bishops, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, transmitted the high power of setting apart others to the ministry. That one bishop also had pre-eminence in a province over a certain number of bishops, although the *title* of Archbishop may not occur before the fourth century, is plain, from the early fact of “Irenæus 70 years from the time of St. John, superintending all the bishopricks in France.” Our Saxon monarchs con-

ferred the nomination to this dignity in right of having founded the see. After the Conquest, the dean and chapter of the cathedral decided on the successor, when a bishoprick became vacant, subject to the confirmation of the English monarch or bishop of Rome, as their respective power chanced to prevail. In the reign of Henry VIII, the king renewed the claim of nomination to a vacant see, under the form of recommending to the dean and chapter a fit person to be consecrated. The royal nomination is not binding, without this ratification of the cathedral. But by their submission to the annexed penalties, on refusal to accept the nomination, security is provided against an unworthy person being admitted to this high office. In Ireland the bishopricks are donative by letters patent.\*

In the collect for the communion service PRAYER IS OFFERED FOR ALL BISHOPS AND PASTORS of the Church, that they may diligently preach the word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof; and that the people may obediently follow the same, that all may receive the crown of everlasting glory. THE EPISTLE, from that of St. Paul to Timothy, enforces the high and holy duties of the pastoral office; or that most tender and instructive charge delivered by the apostle, in his episcopal character, to the presbyters of the Ephesian diocese, at Miletus, is recited; while THE GOSPEL recounts that impressive admonition of St. Peter, "feed my sheep;" or the subject is taken from that

\* To enter upon the subject of *The Mission of the Orthodox Clergy vindicated, The Liberties of the British Church, Archbishop PARKER's Consecration, &c.*, would too far swell this volume, already much beyond the size contemplated. They will be found discussed in Bishop BRAMHALL's *Protestant Succession of Protestant Bishops justified*, the Appendix to ROSE's *Commission and Duties of the Clergy*, ELRINGTON's *Validity of the English Ordinations, &c. &c.*

appearance of the risen Lord to the eleven, when he imparts to them their divine commission, and bestows an earnest of richer grace in the imparting of the Holy Ghost. Another portion of Scripture is sometimes used, containing Christ's final bequest of divine authority to His apostles, as a corporate body, and the assurance of His spiritual presence with the Church, even to the end of the world.

The bishop elect is next presented to the archbishop, and promises obedience to him, as supreme bishop of the province, and his successors. The congregation are next reminded of the Lord Jesus continuing a whole night in prayer before He ordained His apostles, and how the apostles themselves fasted and prayed before they laid hands on Paul and Barnabas; and they are exhorted to pray for the person about to be admitted to so important an office; and the Lord is afterwards besought to send His grace upon him, to the edification of the Church; to replenish him with truth of doctrine and innocency of life, that he may glorify the name of the Lord. But not unto this awful sphere of sacred duty is the bishop admitted, until he has openly, in the hearing of all, avowed his persuasion of a just call, his conviction of the truth and infinite importance of the Bible, his resolution to instruct from the oracles of God, to exercise himself in prayer and devout meditation, to resist the encroachment of false doctrine, to be an example of good works, to promote peace and love, to correct vice within his diocese, to be faithful in the ordination and mission of others, and to show himself gentle and merciful, for Christ's sake, to the needy, the stranger, and the destitute. Most humbly does he profess his entire and exclusive reliance on the help of God, for attaining unto this grace, and fervently is prayer offered to Him that enableth, to give power and accomplishing strength from above. The divine

Comforter is invoked, with his gifts of gracious inspiration, of light, and love, and support. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is besought that this His servant may evermore be ready to spread abroad His Gospel (the glad tidings of reconciliation with God); and that he may have grace to use his authority, not for destruction, but for edification; to help and not to hurt; so that as a wise and faithful servant, giving the members of his Lord's family each their portion of meat in due season, he may at last be received into everlasting joy.

Never was there a sight more truly imposing—from the simple sanctity of the scene—from the holy association with all that is venerable and of divine origin in the Church, than that which follows. To behold, by faith, Christ present with the Church; to realize the ever-living Saviour giving validity to this sacred commission, and blessing those who are appointed to bless in His name! And while the archbishop and bishops lay their hands on the head of the elected bishop, the archbishop solemnly confers upon him the sacred office.

Most weighty is the exhortation which follows, when the Bible is placed in his hands, to seek after piety, and studiousness, and faithful teaching. To take heed to himself and to the doctrine; to be unto the flock of God a shepherd, not a wolf; to hold up the weak, to heal the sick, to bind up the broken, to bring again the outcast, to seek the lost, to be so merciful as not to be remiss, and so to administer discipline as not to forget mercy—this is the pure and elevated range of duty set before the servant of God, “looking unto Jesus,” and waiting for that day when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, and bestow a never-fading crown of glory on all that love Him. The intercessions for the newly-ordained bishop are summed

up, after partaking of the HOLY COMMUNION, in these most impressive desires—that he may be endued with the Holy Spirit, and in preaching God's word may not only reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience, but be a wholesome example, in word, in conversation, in love, in faith, in chastity, and purity—that he may faithfully fulfil his course before the Great Judge, who liveth with the Father and the Spirit one God\*.

#### THE FORMS OF PRAYER FOR Nov. 5, JAN. 30, MAY 29, AND JUNE 20.

The observation of the three first of these days is enjoined by act of Parliament, though the particular services to be used on them are not; these being specially authorized by order of the Queen under her sign manual. The inauguration day is not, like the rest, enjoined by Parliament. The authority upon which the services for these days stand is renewed at the commencement of every reign. And the two houses of Parliament have given their assent to them by sometimes addressing the Sovereign for the performances of them, and by always being present at these religious solemnities.

It has been said, that by expressly appointing the 27th chapter of St. Matthew as the second lesson for the anniversary of King Charles's martyrdom, that we impiously compare the king's sufferings to those of our Saviour; but the cavil stands upon the same ground as many others against our liturgy, which have already been considered, namely, the ignorance of the objector; for the chapter is no other than that appointed in the usual course by the Church to be read

\* The above is from the Rev. J. Pinder, of Lambeth, of whose volume of excellent sermons I have already availed myself occasionally, in former parts of this work.

on the 30th of January. And the account of Bishop Juxon's reading it to the blessed martyr is highly affecting. Dissenters, it may be remarked, usually take their opinion of the King's character from NEAL's *History of the Puritans*, whose statements in most instances are totally at variance with the truth.

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#### CONCLUDING ADDRESS TO CHURCHMEN.

The Prayer Book is your own book, your own inheritance, as sons of the Church. In a series of services of pure and solemn beauty, it accompanies you from the cradle to the grave. It meets you at the baptismal font; it furnishes you with a catechism for your younger years; it goes with you when you seek the bishop to take upon yourselves your baptismal vow. When you enter into the estate of holy matrimony, there again the Prayer Book meets you, and sends you out into the world with blessing and with prayer: you see it still with the same unwearied care and assiduous love receiving your children at the font, as it received yourselves before; and going from the font to the altar to join the thankful mother in her praises to Almighty God for her deliverance from the great pain and peril of child-birth. Then, when illness comes upon you, and lays you low upon the bed of suffering, the Prayer Book brings the priest to your side, bids him soothe your aching heart, fill you with the hopes of the Gospel, and pour upon you, by his effectual blessing, a peace which this world can neither give nor take away. Nay, it leaves you not even when your eyes are closed in death; it waits for you by the side of the opened tomb, and gravely and affectionately commits your spirit to Almighty God, reminding the dull earth that it must give you up

again at the resurrection of the dead. Again, are there any here present who are mothers, whose affections are far away with sons who are serving their country on the great deep? How blessed for them to feel that there, on the wide sea, the Prayer Book, perhaps the very one they gave them at parting, is with them still; that its calm and untroubled voice is lifted up above the swelling of the storm, and that should death come to any one among them, the Prayer Book speaks as much of hope and rest on the tossing waters, as if it were still in a quiet country churchyard at home.

Now there is something so simple, so touching, so gentle, in this domestic character of our Church services, that a person who had weighed them well, a person who bore in mind how, for generations and generations, the Prayer Book, like a ministering angel, had walked side by side with his fathers, would surely feel as if he were wronging their sacred memory, lightly to leave the inheritance they had left him, and to seek for a home in some far land among aliens and strangers. It is only in the bosom of the Church that you can realize that strong feeling of home, which is so grateful to a mind weary with the endless tossings of this unquiet generation. It is the Church only, which, full of life and power within herself, can afford to discountenance that feverish excitement, on which unsatisfying food so many of the poor sheep of Christ are content to feed; that can say to her children, in all her staid, and grave, and beautiful solemnities, *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.* It is the Church only, who from her lofty seat will not stoop to allure you onwards by dangerous novelties in doctrine or in discipline, that turns neither to the right hand nor the left, but walks meekly upon

the old ways whereon the Lord hath placed her, and where his gracious hand will keep her steady for evermore. It is the Church only who dares lift up her voice to reprove all heresy and schism, who will not and does not respect persons, and who, strong in the confidence of her most holy faith—that *faith once for all delicered to the saints*—dares openly to pronounce the threatenings of God against those who deny the divinity of his blessed Son, and bring in another doctrine than that which hath been delivered to us *from the beginning*. Shall it be for us, then, my brethren, to leave this loving mother? Shall it be for us to hew out cisterns for ourselves, to leave those green pastures and fresh watercourses wherein we now may live so peaceably? I pray God most fervently that He will keep us steadfast in this faith, that He will not let us be *blown about by every wind and blast of vain doctrine*; for he that is unstable as water shall not excel. I pray God, that in the ancient Church wherein we were all of us born, we may calmly and soberly live, and that in her enfolding arms we may, one by one, drop off to sleep, like innocent children, till the bright and morning star arises in perfect beauty, and we go to dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem\*.

\* F. W. Faber.

THE END.

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